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LUKÁCS'S EIGENART DES "ÄSTHETISCHEN"

by



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ABSTRACT

This thesis undertakes a survey and inventory of Lukács's *magnum opus*, *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*. An attempt is made to discover the hidden conceptual structure of Lukács's thought.

It will be argued that Lukács's dualistically structured characterization of art leads him into serious difficulties. These difficulties seem to result from Lukács's efforts to reconcile his two contradictory basic assertions, viz. the assertion of man's basically socio-economic nature with the assertion of man's persistent need for an ontological definition of what he is.

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(a) INSTEAD OF AN INTRODUCTION: LUKÁCS AND SOME ASPECTS OF HIS AESTHETICS.

Anybody attempting to assess and analyze Georg Lukács's impressive *magnum opus* will find himself confronted with diverse difficulties; the obstacles stem not only from the problem of understanding and translating Lukács's long sentences of academic German, but especially arise from the lack of an explicit coherence within the conceptual context of his work.¹ Ágnes Heller, his pupil who "critically proofread"² his work, puts it rather mildly, when she explains: "Often Lukács does not explicitly state these interrelations of his different theories or tie up the threads, but any attentive reader can do so."³ Unfortunately Ágnes Heller does not help us to tie up these threads. Probably more than mere attention is needed to comprehend Lukács's ideology.

Even Lukács himself is prepared to concede that all his hitherto (i.e. up to 1970) written works are "more or

¹ Georg Lukács, *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, Werke, vol. 11 and 12, Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, Neuwied am Rhein, 1963.

² Ibid., preface, p. 31.

³ Ágnes Heller, *Lukács's Aesthetics*, *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, Winter 1966, pp. 84ff.

less provisory in solving his ideological problems [Problemlösungen].¹ Only if we look for ourselves into his *Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, can we notice a certain pattern. Beginning mostly with diverse problematic aspects of art, Lukács arrives always at some interpretation of the whole field of aesthetics - however, often within a different conceptual framework. In fact, one of our reasons for adding the appendix to this dissertation is to illustrate the shifting pattern of the Lukácsian thought.

Our main task will therefore consist in grasping Lukács's ideological framework. That is to say, we must render Lukács's thought as truly and at the same time as coherently as possible. Success in this task will be limited by the complexity, and sometimes, the inconsistency of Lukács's work. He will have to resolve his own paradoxies - we shall simply record them. We can hardly be made responsible for the philosophical sins of others, though it will be our first concern to do justice to Lukács's enormous efforts. This will be our aim, and in doing so, we shall find ourselves involved in the discussion of the meaning of man and his language, a question of

¹ An Interview with Georg Lukács, *Die Zeit*, Feuilleton, April 14, 1970.

particular interest to the contemporary mind.

The observer of the last sixty years of European philosophy can hardly miss a distinct tendency in the development of its different, apparently exclusive branches. This seems especially the case, if he still can step back and have a good look at them from without. That is to say, he should not become absolutely committed to either way of thinking so that he may make use of all diverse tendencies. For instance, he should neither hold that we can depict things truly only via symbolic language, and that we can thus only delineate the scope and system of such a language; nor should he hold that all previous ways of cognitive thinking led only to self-deceit, and that philosophical disputes about the world are in fact only words we say to each other about the meaning and scope of different language games; nor should he hold that the philosopher's task can be found only through the interpretation of the original works of our Western thought, and that philosophers can therefore only ask about the possibilities of a meaningful interplay between the historical man and his world, or that only the creative language of the great artists is an appropriate medium for giving an adequate meaning to this world. These short outlines of some prominent philosophic premises of the present day are neither meant to represent fully their

subsequent doctrines, nor intended to exhaust the number of contemporary schools; however they should suffice to indicate that the problem of language and meaning has been gradually moving into the focus of philosophic attention.

We should pause and consider that this peculiar pre-occupation with the meaning of language seemed to characterize only the relatively unregulated "Western-Capitalistic" branches of philosophy, while the more regulated "Eastern-Communitistic" philosophers follow rather closely their Marxist ideology. This latter doctrine is based upon the philosophic premise of a definite historical sequence of socio-economic class-struggles developing in accordance with a dialectically determined matter. That is to say, Marxist ideology is ultimately based upon the conception that matter moves in conformity with a Marxian version of Hegelian logic. Hence, it seemed plausible enough to us that anyone holding such a doctrine of ultimately pre-determined rational premises, could not really entertain any epistemological doubts about language and its meaning. All in all, matter moved for him in accordance with the Marxist dialectic, and Marxist dialectic itself resulted ultimately from matter in motion. Furthermore, considering the rigid system of practised Marxism, many of us felt that there existed indeed some sort of iron curtain in philosophy which prevented philosophers from becoming involved in each

other's way of thinking.¹ However, it appears now to us that we must change our views about present-day Marxist ideology, or at least modify them considerably. Georg Lukács's recently published work on aesthetics may well prove to be one of the major events provoking such a revision. Lukács's work indicates clearly a shift of emphasis within the structure of Marxist ideology.²

It seems quite impossible to us that any reader could miss the importance Lukács attributes to his theory of language. He devotes, for instance, almost three entire chapters to demonstrating his astonishing theory of an adequate signal system of art; moreover he uses about 200 more pages, namely his whole last chapter, for dealing with the diverse connexions between meaning and language. Altogether, Lukács employs almost one third of this work, (i.e. ca. 600 pages) for explaining and elaborating his doctrine of language and meaning. Without doubt, Lukács's new

¹ Recalling our previously sketched samples of present-day philosophic premises, we must add that we can easily discern another border dividing contemporary thought. It is the gap between Western European and Anglo-Saxon philosophers, a fact that cannot be ignored easily.

² Of course, I do not want to say that Lukács's book is the only publication indicating such a change. For instance, there are also Robert Havemann's recently published lectures (*Dialektik ohne Dogma*, Rowohlt Verlag, Hamburg, 1964).

book confirms our previous remark about a recent growth of interest in the structure of language.

The scope and the growth of the contemporary interest in the philosophy of language indicate that the forces behind this event must be of a profound order. As some of us might have expected, the philosophers of the diverse schools propose different determining forces and consequently furnish different justifications for their respective interest in the meaning of language. Yet they can hardly give the precise reason for the general growth of interest. Moreover, it is obvious that this common concern cannot stem from the mutual interest they take in each other's contradictory premises.¹

Of course, it would be a mistake to think that the absence of any serious dialogue between the protagonists of the contemporary schools represents a unique, historical situation. It is not very difficult for anyone to find a similar intellectual situation in the past. Goethe, for instance, compares in a witty simile some of his predecessors with billiard balls "which blindly roll pell-mell upon the green cloth without knowing each other and which, as soon as having met each other move apart again

¹ E.G., consider Herbert Kohl's account in his introduction to his book *The Age of Complexity*. (The New American Library of Canada, Toronto, 1965).

at once."¹ Surely, Goethe's simile can be readily employed to describe the interrelation of certain twentieth century thinkers.

No doubt one of Lukács's merits consists in his great efforts to surmount these difficulties which separate the diverse groups that move upon the same field of linguistic interest. Nonetheless, this does not mean that Lukács begins his thought without taking sides. Leaving no doubt that he considers himself a Marxist, he declares that Marx must have maintained a definite aesthetic theory, and he goes on to say that it is wrong to conclude that Marx did not hold any such theory because he failed to put his aesthetic views into any systematic context.² Lukács considers the Marxian production as a whole and emphasizes that Marx, after all, did have predecessors who influenced his thought; Lukács emphasizes in this connexion *his own* indebtedness to the thought of Aristotle, Goethe and Hegel.³

¹ Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*; Artemis Verlag, Zurich, 1949, p. 241; my translation.

² Op. cit., vol. 11; Introduction, pp. 13ff. Cf. also Stefan Morawski, *The Aesthetic Views of Marx and Engels; The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Spring 1970, pp. 301ff.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 20.

Furthermore, he stresses the vulgarizing tendencies of some of Marx's followers and refers particularly to the Stalinists' definition of the artist as an engineer of the human soul, a view which he rejects.¹ Lukács is convinced that the great artist produces a far more intimate work than does the engineer with his tools. Though a Marxist, he does not even hesitate to call art an *organ* of mankind.²

Any great work of art represents for Lukács a true, though complex mirror which reflects a definite situation in the human world. It mirrors always a specific relation between the artist's objective environment and his subjective world. All art reflects such dualistically structured pictures of human situations. That is to say, all great works of art mirror the objective, socio-economic nature of mankind as well as man's subjective, "ontological definition"

[*Ontologische Bestimmung*]³ of himself; of what man thinks he is.

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 817, 867. Furthermore cf. op. cit. vol. 11, pp. 13ff, 18f, 204, 594; vol. 12, pp. 829 and 871.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 846. It appears that Lukács restricts the term *organ* to the language of science and art.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 681f.

When Lukács speaks about man's objective situation, he always has the Marxist doctrine of man's socio-economic determination in his mind. That is to say, the artist always reflects a relation of two different themes, viz. a specific human situation *within* the confines of the inexorably determined socio-economic development of the human race. All this does not necessarily mean that the artist is able to grasp rationally his historical situation; very often he is not. For Lukács the artist is an instrument of society, a mirror that does not really know what it is reflecting, namely, man's specific situation within the stream of socio-economic progression.

It is not difficult to see that the validity of Lukács's dualistic aesthetic reflection rests upon the validity of the Marxist basic assertion that man is fundamentally determined by his socio-economic situation. That is, the artist could not possibly *reflect* the relations between a specific man and his socio-economic environment, if this socio-economic determination were merely a myth. Within this introduction we cannot possibly pursue the Marxist doctrine any further. Moreover, we should also indicate Lukács's difficulties in demonstrating his dualistic themes within each work of art. Unfortunately, Lukács gives us few concrete examples of his theory, though he announces two books on this topic. There he intends to

concretize the true process of complicated "historic-systematic determinations."¹ Lukács has thus somewhat postponed his *onus propandi* and we are left to accommodate ourselves with that which we possess of his present work.

Finally, we should also mention that Lukács's theory differs from all those theories which limit the potential of aesthetic language to the reflexion of the relation between the artist's *emotions* and his objective environment. Many Marxists accept the latter view. For instance, Christopher Caudwell defines the language of art as "the world of social emotions."² Labelling Caudwell's definition of art a "domain of introverted irrationalism," Lukács opposes such a limitation of aesthetic significance and insists that a true work of art reflects both man's subjective world and the objective world in which he is situated.

As we have seen above, each great work of art reflects a definite human world, i.e. a specific relation between a subjective human situation and its objective place within the socio-economic progression of mankind.

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 14f.

² Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality*, International Publishers, New York, 1947; pp. 29f.

Indeed this relation consists in the difference between the meaningfulness of a specific man's life and the meaning of life itself.¹ For instance, a meaningful life for the Spartans who died at Thermopylae meant "to die for Sparta."² On the other hand, the meaning of life itself represents for Lukács the "essence of man's evolution," Marx's classless society: the free people. Knowingly or not, the great artist will always reflect, and bridge the difference between two sorts of meaning; in our example: the meaning of "to die for Sparta" and the meaning of "to strive towards human freedom." Of course, this difference appears to the diverse groups of mankind in various ways, yet always as a *gap* - say for instance as the difference between "the flow of appearances and the permanence of nature," or the difference between "appearance and essence." ³

Out of man's manifold awareness of this gap grows man's desire and need for completion, which, in turn, stimulates the artist to reflect, and by reflecting bridge this very gap. Now we would like to ask, how is it possible for the artist to do this? Much of what follows will be

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 182.

² Cf. the appendix to this dissertation, p.173

³ Op. cit. vol. 12, p. 249, vol. 11, p. 826.

devoted to examining this question. First of all Lukács maintains that the artist forms with his medium a *spontaneous dialectic* which depicts and bridges with its structure the difference between man's subjective life and his objective world of socio-economic forces, i.e. the difference between man's individual soul and his fate. Surely, it is not very difficult to see why Lukács calls the aesthetic dialectic a *spontaneous dialectic*. He simply wishes to indicate that the artist does not really understand his language just as many people do not understand the grammar of the language which they speak. Lukács accepts and employs many concepts of the Hegelian dialectic; thus he introduces the concept of the *reality of sensuous awareness*. We are at once reminded of Hegel's important concept of *sensuous certainty* [*sinnliche Gewissheit*]; its contradictory appearance represents the first step within his *Science of the Experience of Consciousness*, i.e. his *Phenomenology*.¹ Lukács accepts Hegel's interpretation of the sensuously certain and concludes that any object that we can perceive displays in fact two contradictory aspects,

¹ G.W.G. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Verlag von Felix Meiner, Hamburg, 1952, pp. 19ff.

viz. its duration and its transitoriness.¹ It is precisely this contradictory immediacy of the sensuously certain which enables the great artist to fulfill his aesthetic reflection. Lukács quotes Cézanne:

"Everything that we see is dispersing ... disappears ... is it not so? Nature is always the same, though none of her visible appearances remain. It is up to our arts to bestow on nature the sublimity of permanence and this with the elements of change. In our presentation [conception] art must confer on [nature] eternity."²

Cézanne's words delineate the heart of Lukács's theory of aesthetic reflection: *it is the specific immediacy of the artist's medium, the contradictory immediacy of the sensuous certain, which enables the great artist to reflect the opposing factors of the meaningfulness of man's subjective life and the objective meaning of life itself.* Working with his own medium, the artist forms a specific *objectiveness* which reflects the objectivity of his subject.³

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 714ff.; vol. 12, pp. 199f.
"Contradictory" in the Hegelian sense of *opposing* tendencies.

² Op. cit., vol. 12., p. 249; quoted in German, my translation; of course Cézanne is neither a philosopher, nor does he express himself in normal English.

³ In fact, Lukács calls this specific objectiveness the *undetermined objectiveness* in order to indicate, its being different from the reality which it reflects; Cézanne's apples may not be seen as apples by some primitives. Cf. op. cit., vol. 12, p. 250.

Lukács maintains, that each work of art, each specific *objectiveness*, reflects and contains a "dialectic of determinacy and indeterminacy."¹ Actually what Lukács wants to say is that each work of art contains a determined and an undetermined aspect. Lukács employs the word *undetermined* in much the same as the announcer in the news tells us that the causes of an accident have not yet been determined. That is to say, the speaker takes it for granted that certain circumstances caused the accident and that these circumstances may be found out, i.e. be "determined." Similarly, we might say that the plot of a play, say Molière's *Tartufe*, is determined and thus obvious to any child. However the fact that *Tartufe* never tells a lie is not at all obvious, i.e. it is undetermined. Many people might have seen the sartirical comedy without realizing that this arch-hypocrite Tartufe never tells a lie. Yet the realization of this undetermined fact about *Tartufe* seems to be essential for the understanding of Molière's fascinating portrait of a moral hypocrite.²

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 724.

In Lukács's terminology that which is determined is obvious and forced upon our consciousness - that which is undetermined is not obvious and we may have various degrees of awareness or unawareness of it.

² Our example; Lukács does not even mention Molière's *Tartufe*.

Of course, the structure of this dialectic of determinacy and indeterminacy differs in accordance with the different artistic media. Lukács maintains that the artist knits his fabric of undetermined objectiveness in accordance with his homogeneous medium and subsequently in such a way that the "diverse groups of objects or diverse aspects of objectivity, appear aesthetically necessary, either in a determined, or undetermined form respectively."¹

Probably the shortest way to a comprehensive understanding of Lukács's aesthetic reflexion theory leads us via the Hegelian key-concept of *aufheben*. Hegel uses this term to illustrate the dialectical structure of his historical process. He employs the German word *aufheben* in an unusual way as a three-fold concept, signifying all three of its ordinary meanings; *aufheben* means for Hegel simultaneously *to cancel out*, *to preserve* and *to elevate*. Unfortunately, this verb does not translate easily and is therefore usually rendered by the artificial term *to sublimate*.² Lukács takes over this Hegelian concept, signifying with it the basic structure characteristic of all works of art.³

¹ Op. cit.; vol. 12, p. 250.

² E.G. cf. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, Beacon Press, Beacon Hill, 1960, p. 69.

³ E.G. cf. op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 77, 598.

That is to say, Lukács's artist employs the dialectical moment of *sublation* in order to reflect and bridge, by means of the dialectic of determinacy and indeterminacy, the gap of a subjective human situation within the objective socio-economic progression of mankind.

Summarizing we can say the artist *sublates* a specific aspect of his world through the spontaneous dialectic of his work. The artist fulfills thus his task in a threefold way. Aesthetically speaking, he

- (i) *cancels* an immediate, "specific" situation,
- (ii) and in doing so *preserves* its "transitoriness", and thereby
- (iii) *elevates* it to a higher level of "existence."¹

As we have indicated before, Lukács does not supply any continuous illustration for the entire process of such a spontaneous dialectic. However, in putting together some of his manifold, but incomplete examples, we shall here attempt one continuous illustration in order to give a first, crude idea of the Lukácsian theory.

We must first elaborate our previous account on the Lukácsian dialectic of determinacy and indeterminacy. Lukács argues that the diverse arts, since they utilize

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 743f.; vol. 12, pp. 198ff., 830f., 837f.

different media, reflect diverse structures of determinacy and indeterminacy. Thus it is characteristic of all representational works to differentiate between a determined *without* and an undetermined *within*.¹ That is to say, any true painter or sculptor differentiates between the determined, concrete bodies (the *without*) which he reflects, and an undetermined objectivity (the *within*), namely the forces which he displays through his diverse forms and compository relations.² Of course, this particularly structured dialectic of a determined *without* and an undetermined *within* characterizes *only* the medium of the representative arts. However it will suffice for our illustration which will be the sculptures of Phidias.

If we search for the weave of determinacy and indeterminacy in the work of Phidias,³ for instance in his frieze of the Parthenon, we should discover that the

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 250ff.

² Ibid.

³ Of course, the reader will realize that Phidias himself was little aware of what he was doing; apparently he was not a philosopher.

Phidian work consists in the unique dialectic between

- (i) a determined, concrete *without* which represents the traditional figures of Greek mythology as well as the new theme of socially significant men and women, and
- (ii) an indetermined *within* that is displayed through a "turning-into-the-surface-of-the-stone" of the first human confession to the immanent might and power of the human race.¹

Keeping this language of the Phidian stone in our mind we next ask how it is possible for the sculptor to *sublate* his world within his work. How far can we maintain that Phidias *negates*, *preserves* and *elevates* his subjects?

Our first and simplest task will be to show how Phidias *preserves* his world. Surely, we still can look at his works and understand them as speaking witnesses of his time. Being signs of the classical Greek period, they preserve for us a specific, not interchangeable world within the development of the human race. Furthermore, we can say that the Greek gods do still exist for us, namely as

statues

¹ Similar notions can be found in conjunction with some of Lukács's own examples. Cf. op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 676, 744, vol. 12, pp. 832f., 838. Surely it is not very difficult to recognize the human forces in the first smile which appears in the faces, or the obviously human beauty of the sculptured bodies.

and inasmuch as they have taken shape in stone. In addition, this apparent truism helps us also to grasp the function of the artistic articulation. Hewing his gods into marble, or creating them in chryselephantine, Phidias transforms - be he aware of it, or not - his transcendent gods into the ever present reality of his secular material. *Cancelling* their transcendency, Phidias casts the Greek gods into stone. In other words, the sculptor cancels their traditional significance and de-mythologizes them. Quite literally, he brings them down to earth. As a consequence, the Athenians grow aware that the gods are in fact nothing else, but the idealized Greeks themselves.¹ Nevertheless, beside such a "defetishizing" effect, each artistic *sublation* initiates also a contrary function which restores and elevates the work to a new significance.²

¹ Lukács's theory about a complex aesthetic awareness cannot possibly be dealt with in the context of this chapter.

² I follow the translation employed in Agnes Heller's essay (Op. cit., p. 89) and also render *defetischisieren* with *defetishize*.

To make a fetish of something is to take feelings and emotions which are normally directed towards a spiritual entity and redirect them towards a material object (such as a graven image or an icon). Thus to defetishize would be normally understood as reversing this process and for example, worshipping not the image but the supposedly spiritual entity. With Lukács however defetishizing is not the reversal of fetishizing, but a further step in which the proper object of emotion or feeling is seen to be neither supernaturally transcendent, nor a material object, but rather some aspect of humanity.

Indeed, this *elevating* aspect of all aesthetic language fulfills a fundamental human need, viz. man's desire for a completely meaningful world. Cancelling the significance of the traditional gods, Phidias reveals a new significance. To wit, his sculptures display and elevate for his fellow Greeks the first human delineation of the immanent might of the human race and thus represents an important step in the history of mankind, viz. what Lukács in another context refers to as "the heroic wisdom of the Greek city-state."¹

In addition, we realize how Lukács's aesthetic *sublation* also lends itself to account for two apparently contradictory facts concerning the production and appreciation of art.² Firstly, we are able to use the notion of *sublation* in explaining why a specific work, style or epoch cannot be imitated without loss of aesthetic power. Of course, it is quite possible for, say a contemporary of Henry Moore, to copy the aesthetic language of Phidias; however, we consider such an effort an insignificant curiosity rather than an adequate work of art. It appears that the impetus of the actuating significance of Phidias' unique dialectic was meant for the ancient Greeks and not for us. No doubt, our attitude towards such imitations is plausible, if we consider that each work of art preserves a *specific instance* of a *sublation*.

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 832. Strictly speaking, it is always the *undetermined* aspect within each work which, displaying a respectively new significance, *elevates* to us a new end for our lives.

² Our interpretation.

Apparently it is adequate only for a specific historic situation, e.g., for Phidias and his fellow Greeks. On the other hand, the concept of *sublation* also seems adequate in explaining why we still appreciate the work of Phidias which we refuse to esteem when it is plagiarized. This paradoxical situation can be clarified at once, if we consider not only the transitoriness of the artistic articulation, but also the irretrievable adequacy of its specific dialectic. We should recall what has been said above and understand the Phidian dialectic as an adequate effort which mirrors a necessary step within the progress of the human race. Hence, it is this *universal aspect* of aesthetic adequacy, present in all artistic articulations (*sublations*) that links their transitory, but adequate voices to one mighty echo; its chorus speaks of man's determination to fulfill his work and fate.

(b) THE TELEOLOGICAL ASPECT OF LUKÁCS'S AESTHETIC SPHERE

Chapter (a) was primarily intended as a first approach towards Lukács's *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*; this was possible only by disregarding the shifting framework of the Lukácsian terminology. Throughout, Lukács tends to subdue the fundamental importance of his threefold conception of aesthetic *sublation*, while stressing instead his theory of a twofold aesthetic reflection. Hence we can hardly neglect reviewing his language theory on its own ground and terminology. Any charge of being repetitious we can meet, since following more closely Lukács's own approach should surely reveal new aspects of his aesthetic language theory.

However, before dealing with our topic, it must be understood that Lukács differentiates first between two adequately "reflecting" languages of mankind, viz. the language of science and the language of art. *Wiederspiegelung* [reflection] means always for Lukács the reflecting of a similar, but never identical image of that which is reflected: reality.¹ Surely, even the very accurately reflected image of the mirror differs somewhat from that which it reflects. Lukács asserts now that both languages, art as well as science,

¹ Op. cit., vol. II, chapter 5, *Die Entstehung der ästhetischen Wiederspiegelung*, pp. 352ff.

arose out of the same primitive undifferentiated language of everyday life, and both, in turn began to have repercussions upon the same continuum of everyday language from which they arose. We must apprehend both languages as *organs* which man developed for his own purpose, viz. for the conquest of reality.¹ Surely, it is not without reason that Lukács regards art and science to be *organs* of mankind.² Though he never discusses his choice of this biological term, it is obvious that he desires to indicate a very intimate connexion between mankind and its two adequately reflecting languages. To wit, just as we cannot freely vary the function of our physiological organs, we cannot, ad libitum, modify, change or abandon the intricate system of reflective connexions, which are represented by our two basic languages of art and science. Moreover both organs, art as well as science, reflect one and the same reality, though each in its own typical mode. Science reflects the objective world *in an objective way*, i.e. in such a way that reality exists independently. Science functions like this, whether we like or dislike the laws it reflects, whether a fact makes sense to use, or not. Art reflects objective reality *in a human way*, viz. that reality itself becomes meaningful for us. Lukács

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 846.

² Particularly from a Marxist we would expect another term, say for instance, *tools*.

wants us to apprehend that such an aesthetic meaning is far more than a mere subjective interpretation of the world. For Lukács great art has been, is, and always will be true. Looking at the great works of art throughout history, we shall find all of them realizing one and the same meaning, though each work does so in its own peculiar medium, mode and situation. This meaning is the manifold story of man's growing awareness of himself *and* of his conquest of reality.¹

Here, it should be mentioned, Lukács often begins his argument with a reference to the physiology of I. P. Pavlov.² This is somewhat astonishing when we think that probably no attempt other than Nietzsche's projected *Physiology of Aesthetics* has been made to link closely the artistic expression with the artist's physiology.³ Lukács points out that Pavlov's reflexology represents the only significant advance in the development of a materialistic psychology. Pavlov's great merit consists in refusing to stop with the acceptance of the "laws of

¹ Op. cit., e.g., cf. vol. 11, p. 554; vol. 12, pp. 868f.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 255, 258, 442ff., 464f.; vol. 12 pp. 11ff., 23f., 28f., 31ff., 34f., 36ff., 45f., 77ff., 84f., 91f., 105f., 112f., 194.

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*; Kröner's Taschenbuchausgabe, vol. 76, A. Kroner Verlag, Stuttgart, 1953, p. 352.

psychological determination" and in calling for an extensive study of the *complex interaction* between the psychological phenomena and the environment.¹ Pavlov's claim is based on his research which made him realize that the mediating function of the organism plays a significant role in the life of the higher animals.² That is to say, the psychological functions of the higher animals turned out to be far more complex than Pavlov had at first expected them to be. To be sure, Pavlov's theories do not really suffice to prove the point in question. They are but partly helpful for Lukács who, consequently, is forced to declare that he is merely asking questions which, sooner or later, will be answered by a competent physiologist.³ This is odd, but makes sense, if we consider his further argument, in which Lukács simply insists that the whole problematic situation [*Problemstellung*] of aesthetics forces (!) him to assert the "immanence of a reflective order in all works of art."⁴ Lukács seems to mean that the Pavlovian theory of language must be true, since his study of arts confirms Pavlov's assertions. Pavlov's physiology

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12. p. 1.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 208.

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, chapter 11, especially pp. 11ff.

⁴ Ibid.

proves to be less salient for the Lukács¹ thought than the casual reader might expect.

It should be understood that Lukács¹ introduces actually two dualistic schemata. First, he differentiates between the two "adequately reflecting" languages of art and science, and then he argues for two aesthetic modes which characterize all "adequately reflecting" works of art. Of course, here we are primarily concerned with Lukács's second dualistic scheme, viz. his two modes of aesthetic reflection. As we have seen in chapter (a) each work of art reflects a definite human world, namely a specific human situation and its objective situation within man's socio-economic progression towards a free society. Lukács refers to this aesthetic dualism as the *duplicity of the aesthetic object*; he even coins a new term for it.¹ Indeed both of its interlinked characteristics run like two tightly knitted themes throughout his book. It appears as if Lukács were hesitating to elaborate fully the rationale and consequence of these two apparently contradictory

¹ Op. cit., e.g., vol. 11, pp. 780f. Note that Lukács calls this duplicity *die Gedoppeltheit des ästhetischen Objekts*, (the "duplicationess" of the aesthetic object). Lukács's coinage is interesting, though we shall refrain from any further attempt to render it precisely.

aspects. It is quite symptomatic of his shifting framework of concepts that Lukács has more terms for these two modes, e.g. he calls them also "the two acmes [*Gipfelpunkte*] of aesthetic immanence" and he adds that both acmes belong intimately together.¹ In other words, all works of art reflect reality in a dualistic fashion--almost, as it were, in stereo. It seems, each work manifests a welding together into one piece two important, though apparently contradictory sides of our human world: man's objective "fate" and his subjective "soul" [*Gemüt*].²

We recall that each work reflects a specific human situation and its objective situation within man's evolution towards a free society. We shall begin our investigation with these two modes of Lukács's aesthetic language, which we shall provisionally call the *ontological* and the *teleological* mode of art. In this chapter (b) we shall mostly deal with the teleological mode and in the next chapter (c) with the ontological mode of Lukács's aesthetic language.

The first aspect, viz. the teleological aspect of art, we found based upon the Marxian concept of the dialectical forces of matter in mankind, which in turn find

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 740ff. Yet in the same context, Lukács explains that literature tends to stress one aspect (teleological) and the representational arts the other aspect (ontological) of aesthetic immanence.

² Ibid.

their outlet in the aesthetic forces of reflection.

Lukács quotes Hamlet's saying that art is a mirror, and he concludes that this mirror is *produced teleologically* within each artistic creation.¹ Let us now look at the mirror's maker, the artist himself. What is the artist's aesthetic reflection like? How does he produce this looking glass which proves itself so potent in reflecting and realizing the selfconsciousness of mankind?²

Lukács stresses repeatedly that there is an aesthetic priority of content before form. That is to say, the artist must first select the content for his work from the "life-substance that presents itself to him."³ Curiously enough, this selection is often not a conscious act. The artist chooses the content and its ensemble without being conscious of it; even the best of all intentions cannot help him in his choice. On the contrary, his conscious intentions will most likely affect his art detrimentally.⁴ The artist's labour should be understood

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 837.

² Op. cit., e.g., cf. vol. 11, pp. 572ff. Lukács employs a whole section for this investigation. Its title alone indicates Lukács's doctrine clearly: *From the particular individual towards the self-consciousness of the human race.*

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 828.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 610ff.

as behaviour indeed Lukács calls it so: viz. an originally aesthetic behaviour towards the world. Consequently the artist turns "almost into a jamming point of objective necessity", namely a centre for the meeting and resolution of conflicting forces.¹ Nevertheless, we are not to infer from the notion of necessity that the artist is blindly determined; his unconscious intentions are quite compatible with his peculiar state of mind. Aesthetic subjectivity often turns out to be "the highest of all degrees of awareness."² In short, the artist's first orientation and choice of content is a paradoxical (dialectically contradictory) first realization of the form-content unity which can be found in each true work of art; in fact it is a culminating case of the form-content phenomenon. Not knowing, yet very aware, the artist selects the content with the emotional accent: *nostra causa agitur*, and he realizes thus the content proper via its elevation into man's human cause.³ Such an original aesthetic behaviour is typical of all great masters.

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, 645.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 610ff. No doubt, Lukács's endeavour to establish this point makes up a good part of his work.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 610.

Lukács maintains that only the "truly-born great artist" [*der echtgeborene grosse Künstler*] will never fail in recognizing and realizing the subsequently appropriate content for his work.¹ In order to elucidate the connexion between the artist's subsequent particular, though appropriate choice of content and its transparent meaningfulness, Lukács makes use of Goethe's dictum: ". . . *das Gesetz, wonach du angetreten*, . . ." the law with which you entered into accord.² Through the almost continuous production of great artists mankind has been developing an organ for elevating that aspect of human life which normally remains hidden by everyday life, viz. the fact that it is man alone who gives meaning to his own life. In a magical way, the artist creates "an object of appropriate content for man's subsequent realization of

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 828. Here we are interested only in the first orientation of the artist.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 766. Lukács refers here to a line of Goethe's poem *Ancient words--Orphic*. The first stanza of this metaphysical poem can be translated somewhat like this:

ΔAIMON, *Daemon*

As on the day you were given to the world--
 Saluting his planets stood the sun--
 At once and on and on you thrive
 To the law, with which you entered in accord.
 So must you be, your self you cannot flee--
 Sibyl and prophet said it before;
 No time can break, no power:
 Coined form that livingly itself evolves.

his self-consciousness."¹ This doctrine of man being the centre of human interest "converges aesthetically with the basic attitude of art." This attitude does not represent a straight or one-dimensional programme, but an object in view, i.e. the conquest of reality by man for man, namely the world as the selfmade home of man.² Recalling what we provisionally termed the teleological aspect of Lukács's aesthetic reflection we are now in a much better position to apprehend a definite sequence of three premises which account for the artist's teleological behaviour; its sequence runs somewhat like this:

- (i) The premise of an original aesthetic behaviour; i.e. the artist's unique way ("not knowing, but very aware") of selecting an appropriate content for his labour of reflecting;
- (ii) The premise of a teleologically determined mankind ("with which one enters into accord"); i.e. the artist's conforming behaviour which "reflects" meaningfully:

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 831.

² Op. cit., e.g., cf. vol. 12, pp. 831, 839.

- (iii) The premise of the human cause of man ("nostra causa agitur"); i.e. man's awareness of his freedom for turning the world as such into a meaningful place: his home.

In other words, the great artist is capable of grasping, more or less subconsciously an adequate content for transforming through his work the meaning of a caused man into the meaning of man's cause. In other words, the artistic labour of selecting and displaying meaning is first of all a teleological behaviour and as such a reflection of man's progression towards a free society.

Without doubt the above sequence of the creative process in art correlates to Lukács's teleological aspect of art. Its sequel leads from a selective moment through an appropriate process of labour to a teleologically adequate meaning, a meaningful aim for man: a home for mankind. Through his selective and transformative labour, the artist elucidates his and our awareness of a meaningful world. In short, he realizes meaning through his work: he reflects man working for his freedom. Lukács interprets the work of the artist as *symbolic labour* which articulates the meaning of all human labour, viz. man's development through his own labour. Each genuine work of art turns thus into an eloquent witness for this Marxian definition

of man.¹

One may object that our assertion does not really hold, since Lukács's description of the artistic choice of content neither really fits into the labour pattern of our ordinary workday world, nor into the Marxian account of it. It would be absurd, if we were to say that the worker at the moving assembly belt selects the content of his labour; obviously he has no choice whatsoever. However, the Lukácsian conception of a selective moment ("not knowing, but very aware") does agree with the Marxian conception of labour; *provided*, we agree with Lukács and comprehend each work of art as a teleological behaviour which reflects the whole development of human labour. Marx, for instance, speaks of the "first instinctive forms of labour" that must have operated in order to initiate the process of human labour.²

Lukács's teleological mode of art is based upon his conception of art as symbolic behaviour which reflects

¹ Marx, of course, argues that man, "acting on the external world, and changing it, . . . at the same time changes his own nature." Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1; Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965; pp. 19f.

² Ibid., pp. 177ff. Marx suggests there also that the earth constitutes man's *original larder* and tool house.

the Marxian conception of human labour which, in turn prognosticates the classless society.

Juxtaposing the Marxian theory of man as his own maker and the Lukácsian theory of an aesthetic reflection of man as his own maker, we are able to comprehend Lukács's innovation. As I have indicated already in the first chapter of this thesis, it is uncommon for a Marxist to say that art reflects Marx's basic assertion about the nature of man. Marxist ideology seems to reserve for itself the potentiality to reflect adequately our social relations and the state of the productive relations respectively. Take Marx's oft-quoted sentence that "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence but, on the contrary, their social existence which determines their consciousness."¹ It seems many Marxists accept this assertion, because they comprehend it as the first adequate and determined premise of their ideology which thus, reflecting the determination of man's consciousness, *manifests simultaneously its own patent truth*. To wit, accepting this Marxian premise seems to entail for them the self-evident truth of Marx's ideology

¹ *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Preface; Marx, Engels; Selected Works, vol. 1, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1955, pp. 362ff.

which they contrast with other, obviously, not self-evident ideologies.¹ Surely, Marxists would argue that the consciousness of the artist, say of Homer differs immensely from the consciousness of Marx during the nineteenth century.² Being a true Marxist, Lukács asserts that even Hegel's new concept of man as his own maker "receives its property central position only in Marxist ideology."³ How was it then possible for all the great artists before Marx to reflect one of the fundamental tenets of the Marxian ideology? Surely, they could hardly comprehend that which they apparently reflected. Lukács appears to be more or less forced to maintain that the artist is a mirror which reflects that which he cannot rationally comprehend. Consequently we must distinguish between two theories, viz. the Marxian theory of man as well as the Lukácsian theory of an aesthetic reflexion of this Marxian

¹ As far as we know, few attempts, if any, have been made to compare the self-evidence of this Marxian premise with the self-evidence of the first Cartesian premise.

² Cf. the appendix to this dissertation, pp. 175. Lukács himself emphasizes there that "if we would try to understand the men of Homer's time as contemporary men, then the result would be complete nonsense yet we do experience Homer . . ."

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 855.

theory of man. Hitherto, we have mainly examined the process of artistic labour, but have neglected the validity of the Lukács¹ stepping stone *per se*, i.e. Marx's doctrine of man as his own maker. To be sure, this Marxian teleology of labour has been accepted by many contemporaries, and certainly not by Marxists alone. Nonetheless, we can easily find prominent intellectuals who reject the Marxian theory. Does Marx's definition of man really hold? The questions arising from this disagreement among scholars can be formulated in many ways.¹ For instance, did man acquire his consciousness through his labour? Or did he work, because it made sense to him? Or, could it be that man's consciousness and labour have been intimately linked together throughout his development? Or was this linkage the case only at the beginning of human development? Or could we say, that labour precedes consciousness, say a step ahead all the time? No doubt, all these questions about the Marxian concept of man cannot possibly be answered within the context of this enquiry. Thus we shall provisionally accept Lukács's theoretical stepping stone in order to facilitate our further investigation into Lukács's aesthetic sphere.

¹ E.G., cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Das wilde Denken*; Suhrkamp Verlag, 1968.

Our concern here is not only to look into the first two phases of Lukács's teleological mode of art, but also and especially into its third phase, which denotes the artist's transforming through his work the meaning of a caused man into the meaning of man's cause.¹ How does Lukács differentiate between these two different sorts of meaning? Sometimes it seems, e.g. after reading Lukács's last chapter, as if he wishes to reserve terms like "to make sense" or "meaningful" for the language of art only.² However most of the time it appears as if he wishes to discriminate between two different sorts of meaning, i.e. a significant objectivity on the one hand, and a humane meaning on the other. When elucidating the latter, he says for instance that art "bestows an *elevated* sense upon life."³ The term *elevated* brings back to our mind Hegel's concept of *sublation*. We recall that Phidias's sculptures which displayed and elevated for his fellow Athenians the first manifestation of the might of the human race. Phidias's art satisfied thus a fundamental

¹ Cf. p.32 of this thesis.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 182.

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 838; italics mine.

human need, it revealed to the Greeks a *completely meaningful world*. Yet Lukács never elaborates fully the basic difference between such an aesthetically elevated meaningfulness and the objective meaning signified by the scientist. It appears as if Lukács almost intended to avoid any clearly defined juxtaposition. Fortunately this apparent lack does not really obscure the clarity of his initial juxtaposition of two basic languages and their two respective sorts of significance.

It is precisely this distinction between two kinds of meaning which brings to our mind certain related approaches to the problem of meaning; namely the diverse theories of delimiting the meaning of meaning--attempts which were so prominent among Anglo-Saxon philosophers of this century. Of course, these different doctrines of meaning cannot readily be compared without an adequate exposition. Just the same, even without it we can hardly fail to notice that many of the above mentioned theories of meaning rest upon a similar first distinction, i.e., the juxtaposition of some sort of logically adequate language with other forms of human language.

However, there is an important discrepancy between Lukács's dualistic differentiation and the exclusive modes of juxtaposition indicated above. This difference can easily be found in Lukács's assertion of a fully corresponding

language of art, its elevated sense, its truth, and last but not least, its a posteriori falsifiability. In connexion with such an aesthetic testability we recall Lukács's theory of the great masters, i.e. only the truly-born great artist will not fail in recognizing and realizing the appropriate content for an adequate aesthetic reflexion of an historical situation occurring in objective reality.¹ It is interesting that Lukács does not hesitate to draw the conclusion from this position that only the members of a later historical period will be in a position to judge a work of art with "apodictic certainty." Moreover, he adds that even a well-versed Marxist cannot decide the merits of any contemporary work of art. All that Marxism is able to do, is to give a sort of long-range forecast of general tendencies in art.²

Recalling Lukács's two fundamental human organs of reflection, viz. the language of art and the language of science, we should not be too astounded to find some

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 828.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 610ff. The consequences of such a theory for the artist of the Communist countries should be obvious; provided of course, that Lukács's theory will be accepted among the competent organs of these countries. It is probably also of interest to the reader, that Robert Havemann's *Dialectic without Dogma*, represents an analogously significant attempt for the scientist of the same countries.

inconsistencies between his dualistic basic assertions on the one hand, and his apparent two levels of significance on the other hand. Lukács himself is well aware of the difficulties involved, and he points to this dilemma towards the end of his book. There he maintains that it was Marxism alone that provided an adequate base for a *Weltanschauung* which enabled man "to become the real subject of the whole human life--to be sure--without resolving the lawful determination of his existence."¹

Lukács's assertion is not anything new. His notion corresponds with the traditional Marxian formulation: - "What happens is not merely that the worker brings about a change of form in natural objects; at the same time, in the nature that exists apart from himself, he realizes his own purposes, the purpose which gives the law to his activities, the purpose to which he has to subordinate his own will."²

That is to say, a man who recognizes the laws and determinacy of his existence is free to accept and to use their very existence--note, Lukács indicates clearly that art cannot possibly overcome this state of affairs.³

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, 856; italics mine.

² Karl Marx, Capital, vol. 1; Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965; p. 19.

³ G. Lukács, op. cit., vol. 12, p. 856.

On the one hand, Lukács seems to say that the language of art cannot signify any meaning outside of the aesthetic sphere. This point may also be easily deduced from many of his arguments. For instance, let us look once more at the artist's unique way of selecting the content, appropriate for expressing man's object in view, i.e. man's own justification as his own maker. Being in fact a mouthpiece of objective necessity--a telephone connecting to Marx's classless society--the language of art "*originates only for the purpose of rendering clearly conceivable, the sense and meaning of the very uniqueness of man.*"¹ Evoking the human necessity for turning the world into a completely meaningful place, the artist's language remains *within* the realm of objective necessity. In other words, Lukács teleological aspect of art is based upon his assertion of the artist's prognostic *behaviour*. The artist will reflect that which he must reflect. On the other hand, Lukács seems to say that art constitutes a necessary human organ for transforming the significance of objective necessity into an *elevated* significance of human freedom. That is to say, man cannot disregard the aesthetic link between himself and his ends without severe consequences. Society

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 182; italics mine.

must not, so to speak, sever the connexions established through its mouthpiece which, signifying a free man, gives meaning to its life. Indeed, Lukács seems to think that the determinacy of the socio-economic basic process is not enough to ensure man's human progress; and that only a specific linkage in the superstructure, via the teleological mediation of art, will throw the switch towards man's true development.¹ Now one asks, is it possible for Lukács to accept the doctrine of man's socio-economic determination (which puts art in the superstructure of society) and still maintain the elementary force: man's "*tieftes Bedürfnis nach Kunst*" [deepest need for art]?² It appears that Lukács's essentially needed organ of art should be placed into the Marxian category of the socio-economic base. Besides, Marx's distinction between superstructure and socio-economic base seems to become insignificant whether we put Lukács's concept of art into it or not. That is to say, if we include the arts in the socio-economic base, then such a base would cease to be only socio-economic (in the Marxian sense); and, if we leave the arts in the superstructure, then such a superstructure would cease to be only the function of the

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 867.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 183.

socio-economic base (in the Marxist sense); to wit, such a superstructure (in the Lukács¹ean sense) fulfills an *essential human need*. Nevertheless, this would be true only, if Lukács were to say that art was not only essential for man's psychic needs, but that art also played a necessary role in changing the socio-economic structure from one form to the other, viz. that art has a function independent of the socio-economic mode of production. Lukács does never assert such a view, yet this fact alone does not necessarily resolve the question which we have posed above. Of course such an investigation into the problematic interrelation of the Marxian concepts of superstructure and socio-economic base cannot possibly be investigated within the limited topic of this paper.¹

¹ Such a study would probably also include a comparison of the early and late works of Karl Marx.

(c) THE ONTOLOGICAL ASPECT OF LUKÁČ'S AESTHETIC SPHERE

In this chapter we are concerned with Lukács's concept of aesthetic reflection, but unlike our procedure in the previous chapter (b), we are now approaching it from its opposite mode, i.e., the reflection of man's subjective situation. We recall that the teleological mode of a work reflects man's objective situation through the artist's teleological behaviour. The artist's subjective effort transforms the meaning of "a caused man" into the elevated, but restricted meaning of man's cause and purpose.¹ But what, and how does the ontological aspect of art reflect? Could it be that the ontological mode complements the teleological process?

Apparently referring to both modes of his theory of aesthetic reflection, Lukács defines the artistic activity as a "materialization of a higher, more spiritual and conscious level of labour" in which (i) the object-transforming labour ties inseparably with (ii) a "listening to the secrets of the given matter."² We know already the teleological mode of the artistic work, that is how the artist chooses and transforms the aesthetic content; but we do not yet understand the ontological mode of his work, that is his comprehension of reality, his listening to and understanding of this content.

¹ Cf. p. 32 of this thesis.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 554.

Lukács's employment of the term *listening* [*Erlauschen*] sounds no less unique in the original than does its literal translation rendered here. However it seems worthwhile to indicate that Lukács is not the first to describe the specifically artistic attention in auditory terms. Nietzsche had previously employed a similar metaphor for his rather different description of artistic attention, and we note also Heidegger's use of the same term.¹ Lukács is apparently not aware of this similarity, though he does point to Goethe who, confronted by the same phenomenon (although he does not use the auditory metaphor), expressed sometimes a similar attitude of wonder and astonishment.² Lukács argues that this sort of enchantment-- he calls it the artist's *spontaneous materialism*³-- has

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*; Kröners Taschenbuchausgabe, vol. 76, A. Kröner Verlag, Stuttgart, 1953; p. 97. Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*; Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, 1959; pp. 32f.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 754, 757, 777, 780f., 790ff. In one passage, Lukács speaks of the artist's "Platonic astonishment." (op. cit., vol. 11, p. 777).

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 702, 755. Lukács's employment of the term "spontaneous materialism" for expressing the artist's specific attention towards his content is very odd. In philosophy the term "materialism" is normally used to express the doctrine that matter is the basic reality. Apparently, Lukács wishes to express something else; surely he wishes to characterize the artist's specific attention towards his content. Could it be that Lukács wanted to express by the word "materialism" that the artist's attitude is always stimulated by some sensuous and thus - for a Marxist - material phenomena?

its origin in the distinctive force of sensuous immediacy, its *factum brutum* [*brutale Faktizität*].¹ Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to conclude that the artist merely reacts emotionally in expressing his astonishment; his response is far more complex than this. Lukács stresses especially the cognitive nature of the artistic experience, and he argues that the catalytic content appears always to the artist in a distinct form: its respective "just-so-ness."² Nevertheless, though comprehending the distinct structure of a given immediacy, the artist does not, like the scientist, analyze its "just-so-ness". Yet even so, we must not think that such an unanalyzed, but distinct immediacy provides the artist with a ready-made pattern for this reflection. Such is not the case. The great masters do more than merely accentuate the distinctive features of their content; in fact, they articulate a far more intricate "effect" of their content than this.³ Having these diverse phases of

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 757.

² Lukács speaks also of the content's *distinctive determination*. E.g., cf. op. cit., vol. 11, p. 715ff., 774ff., 780f. I follow the translation used in Agnes Heller's essay (op. cit.) and render also Lukács's odd coinage *Geradesosein* with *just-so-ness*.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 755; vol. 12, p. 265. E.g., Lukács speaks of the artistic content and its "effect of the structure"

the ontological mode in mind, we might say that Lukács's ontological mode represents a very complex, but definite structure of artistic positions--an "original and unique unity of determinations"--which immediately, but intricately reflects a respective "just-so-ness" of human life.¹

Lukács's many accounts of the ontological aspect of art seem to be somewhat incoherent. Quite involuntarily, we find ourselves asking whether it could be that the author himself was not aware of his stylistic deficiency. Being a master of literary criticism, Lukács could hardly have failed to notice his own way of presentation. Besides, many of his critical essays demonstrate clearly his ability to employ a coherent diction.² Could it then be that he was not aware of his own incoherency? Or had he any good reasons for his vague *modus discendi*? Perhaps he had not yet made up his mind about the precise nature of his two modes of aesthetic reflection. Not wishing to contradict himself, he may have left the passages vague on purpose. Thus he would be able to return to them and modify them in

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 675, 681ff.

² E.g., consider introduction to and text of Lukács's *Studies in European Realism*; The Universal Library; Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 1964.

the future without being forced to contradict himself.¹

Of course, it is not difficult to find more than one explanation for Lukács's evasive style. For example, he simply may have wished to avoid any political pressure or persecution.

Be all this as it may, we still must attempt to follow Agnes Heller's suggestion and tie up the threads of the Lukácsian presentation into one coherent picture.² From our foregoing analysis we know that the ontological aspect of each work displays an intricate, but definite pattern of positions which, ultimately, reflect a distinct content. Lukács argues also that only those artists will really succeed who are able to comprehend and posit the "respectively most important oppositions" of their given content.³ In order to support such a cognitive characteristic of art, Lukács adopts Engels' assertion of all reality and its consequent state of interconnectedness.⁴

¹ This assumption is somewhat confirmed by Lukács who admitted in a recent interview that all his works are more or less provisory in solving his ideological problems. (Cf. p. 1 of this dissertation)

² Op. cit., pp. 84ff.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 675.

⁴ E.g., Lukács refers us frequently to Engels' formulation of interconnectedness; (op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 38, 81ff., 95, 108f., 127, 162, 209f., 213, 286, 359, 363, 596, 669f., 681ff., 702; vol. 12, pp. 21, 51f., 80ff., 248, 265f., 291 847f). Friedrich Engels' *Dialectic of Nature*; Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954.

Lukács is maintaining that all aesthetic positing stems from, mediates, and reflects a multitude of tensions which, ultimately, owe their unification to one fact: the interconnectedness of reality.¹ Moreover, the great artist must reflect tensions which are significant, viz. the tragic tensions of an historic period. Ultimately, the great artist will always reflect the intimate solidarity of the opposing forces in life; just the same, the great artist is not impartial but takes sides, perhaps unconsciously, with one or the other forces. This is what Lukács calls the artist's *elemental partiality*.² Lukács never fully explains why he chose the term "elemental partiality". Apparently, he employs the adjective "elemental" in order to indicate that the artist cannot help but reflect things "the way they really are". The artist seems to be more or less

¹ Of course, here we cannot discuss the validity of Engels's concept, nor can we investigate its conformity with Lukács's startling concept of its aesthetically adequate reflection.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 518, 584f., 591ff., 672ff. Of these forces, Lukács stresses especially, on the one hand the *difference* between the mere particularity of man's everyday life and the self-consciousness of mankind, and on the other hand, the *plurality* of man's diverse arts--the latter is not only a function of the diverse contents, but also "inseparably" one of aesthetic continuance, viz. of the artistic form, content and ideology (E.g., cf. op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 675, 681f.)

forced to reflect his content objectively. Consequently, we should now expect that the artist reflects his content impartially, that is to say, *without* partiality. Why then does Lukács speak of the artist's *elemental partiality*? Lukács seems to hold that the objective point of view (namely that of impartiality) cannot be achieved by the artist--just as the painter of a landscape must choose a certain point for his easel, which will consequently force him to depict some things closely and precisely, and other things at a distance and vaguely. The artist cannot depict everything, but only some things and even those with different size and emphasis. Franz Kafka expressed a similar point of view very clearly; he writes:

"Only a party to a case can really judge, but being a party, it cannot judge. Hence, there is no possibility of judgment in the world but only the glimmer of a possibility."¹

So, great art tends to frighten people and leads thus to such spurious criticism as, say, the charges of sadism and distortion of reality.² To illustrate this point, Lukács refers us to Goethe, though this time to a passage that originated from the poet's play *Tarquato Tasso*, which

¹ Quoted by Ernst Fischer, *The Necessity of Art*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1970; p. 110.

² *Op. cit.*, vol. 11, pp. 755ff.; vol. 12, p. 839.

Goethe himself articulated once more in a slightly modified way in one of his last and most revealing lyric poems:¹

And, when man grows silent in his pain,

*A God gave me to say what I do suffer.*²

Lukács characterizes the ontological aspect of art by saying that it reflects the *exact fate-atmosphere* [*eigentliche Schicksalatmosphäre*] of the-reflected content's "just-so-ness".³ Apparently he wants to say that the artist posits exactly certain tragical tensions of an historic period; thus he reflects an important incident within the fate of mankind. For instance consider Homer's scene where the old Priam drives up to Achilles in order to receive Hector's corpse. According to Lukács, this scene reflects an important problem of Priam's fate--"a problem

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 592 f.

² Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Trilogie der Leidenschaften*, Gesamtausgabe; Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, München, 1961; vol. 2, pp. 112ff.; (*Tarquato Tasso*: ibid., vol. 10, p. 227); Goethe's italics; my translation. Caroline Herder writes to her husband that Goethe confided in her the true meaning of his play depicts Tasso's *disproportion to life* (cf. ibid., vol. 10, pp. 237ff.). Approximately forty years after finishing *Tasso*, Goethe uses his hero's lines once more, to link the first two parts of his very complex lyric poem, his autobiographic *Triology of Passions*. It should also be mentioned that Goethe modifies Tasso's words how I suffer, into *what I suffer*. Lukács discusses Goethe's "consistent and deeply meaningful modification" in a very long footnote of more than twenty lines. (op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 592f.)

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 673.

which . . . no man can skip over if he . . . wants to settle his own account with his past and himself."¹

How then does the artist knit this exact fate-atmosphere of a reflected object's "just-so-ness"?² How does he posit its structure, its form? So much seems obvious, the structure of his work must somehow resemble that which it reflects. To wit, his structure must constitute far more than an emotional response to his content. In spite of his calling the artistic ability for positing an "ability to guide the respective emotions," we must guard against any psychological interpretation of Lukács's ontological mode of art.³ *Sensu stricto*, it is not the artist's emotional reaction, but rather his precise positing of patterns (which are capable of evoking significant emotions) which determines the aesthetic quality of his work. In other words, the artist must posit his content in such a way that it arouses certain significant emotions. Positing is the artist's means of guiding the emotions of his audience. The positing artist will therefore rearrange the structure of his content in order to arouse and direct significant emotions in his audience. The

¹ Cf. the appendix of this thesis, p. 180

² Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 673.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 682.

artistic positing is thus far more a cognitive act, than an emotional reaction. Take for instance William Blake's precisely posited little poem, *Love's Secret* and observe the intricate interrelations of words in it:¹

Never seek to tell thy love,
Love that never told can be;
For the gentle wind doth move
Silently, invisibly.

I told my love, I told my love,
I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears,
Ah! she did depart!

Soon after she was gone from me,
A traveller came by,
Silently, invisibly:
He took her with a sigh.

For instance, note that the first two lines contain three repetitions: "never," "love" and "tell", and that the identical words of each pair are used in a different way. Obviously they express different meanings. For instance, the first "love" designates a person and the second "love" signifies the feeling of love. Blake's

¹ Our example.

positing indicates and reconciles their significantly different meanings. The whole of Blake's perfect little poem employs not much more than a handful of basic concepts, yet its great charm is based on Blake's ingenious juxtaposing of certain concepts and ideas which reflect a concentrated totality of tensions between two lovers and their spoiled sweet secret of love.¹

Lukács stresses that the artistic positing "is not only a simple and necessary result" of the artist's content, "*but defines the artist's composition ontologically.*"² Listening to the sensuous immediacy of his content, the artist transfigures the tensions of his content into an internalized immediacy: the "restored immediacy" of his work.³ To be sure, only the great artist will fully succeed in this art of transfiguration, e.g., the "unequivocal clarity of Homer's positions [*Bestimmungen*]." ⁴ Only the translucent articulation of the great artist makes it possible

¹ I am indebted to Susanne K. Langer's interpretation of Blake's poem (*Problems of Art*, the Scribner Library, New York, 1957; pp. 56ff). It stimulated my understanding in this poem, although S. K. Langer's interpretation differs greatly from my imagined "Lukácsian" interpretation.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 682; italics mine.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 774.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 744.

for an audience to go through and experience the totality of essential tensions. "Thus *Being*, the simple existence of a respective content, *gains a meaning which it cannot achieve in everyday life*."¹ We might say, Homer's *Iliad*, displaying a totality of social, economic and personal tensions, appeared, appears and will appear to be more meaningful to the innumerable audience of Homer than the actual tensions appeared to the Greeks who lived through the Trojan war.

In order to elucidate his ontological-cognitive mode of art, Lukács refers his readers to Keats's famous *Ode on a Grecian Urn* and quotes "the passage decisive for this aesthetic principle:"²

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal--yet, do not grieve;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 774; italics mine.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 530f.

Ah, happy happy bough! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
 And happy meadowist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new;
 More happy love! More happy, happy love!
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd.
 For ever panting and for ever young; . . .

When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'--that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

In pursuance of Keats's meaningful beauty, Lukács adopts Goethe's concept of the *ineffable*, maintaining that Goethe's term does not really imply the irrationality of such an aesthetic truth, but rather our immense difficulty in grasping it rationally.¹ This is particularly true for the artist, say for instance, the painter of the Greek urn who, surely, did not comprehend the rationale of his positing, though positing in accordance with it (viz. "the identity of the beautiful and the true").² Grasping the intensive complexity of his content (its interconnectedness),

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 119f., 140f., 154ff., 157., 169ff., 172ff., 728ff., 731.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 530f.

the great artist succeeds in positing and reflecting it in all its concentration and totality. Only thus is it possible for the artist to fulfill the aesthetic completion of his work.¹ The beautiful emerges thus as an ineffable reconciliation of the totality of all oppositions. Indeed any such reconciliation signifies an inexhaustible totality, a syntony of all "hidden laws" that would have remained hidden without the appearance of beauty and its subsequent completion through the artist.²

Lukács's notion of the artist's spontaneous materialism³ seems to be closely connected with his assertion of the artist's "fundamental aesthetic relation to reality" [*originär "ästhetische Beziehung zur Wirklichkeit"*]⁴. The artist seems to be capable both of experiencing the intensive complexity of some aspect of nature (say a rose), and of evoking its immediacy in the "immediacy of his work" (his picture of the rose).⁵ Thus, any great work of art

¹ Ibid.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 530f.; vol. 12, pp. 154f.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 702, 755, 826. cf. p. 46 of this dissertation.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 621.

⁵ Ibid.

represents the artist's experience as the immediate sense of that which is purely aesthetic [*die Unmittelbarkeit des rein Ästhetischen*]: the identity of the beautiful and the true.¹ That is to say, we experience in his picture of the rose--directly and without reflecting upon it--a beautiful and true phenomenon of life.

Having approached Lukács's ontological aspect of art from many directions, we have somehow penetrated to its core. As in our previous investigation into Lukács's teleological mode of art, we are again able to discern a sequence of premises within the ontological mode. Delineating the artist's ontological positing of his content; these premises read somewhat like this:

- (i) The premise of a purely aesthetic experience of sensuous immediacy; i.e., the artist's elementary attitude of internalizing and understanding ("listening to the secrets of given matter"):
- (ii) The premise of the dialectic nature of reality and its consequent interconnectedness which enables the artist to grasp spontaneously the object of his aesthetic experience, i.e., its

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 531.

most important oppositions and tensions within a particular historical context with elemental partiality¹ (a "God" gave the artist the power to say what man suffers):

- (iii) The premise of a specific aesthetic immediacy, produced in each work of art; i.e., the artist's unequivocally clear positing of a respective aesthetic immediacy: the intensively inexhaustible reconciliation of all oppositions ("beauty is truth, truth beauty").²

Lukacs's teleological aspect of art and its *teleological* function as an elevator of the meaning of mankind returns to mind.³ No doubt Lukács's ontological aspect of art has a similar lifting effect; though this time it is an *ontological* function; it reconciles the meaning of the respective historic tensions of man with the ineffable identity of the syntony of all oppositions.⁴

¹ Cf. p. 18 of this thesis.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 530f. Lukács speaks even of a "purely aesthetic experience" and of its "promise of the lost paradise" (vol. 12, pp. 668f.).

³ Cf. chapter (b) of this thesis.

⁴ It is precisely the characteristic of the greatest art to reveal and reconcile this sort of tension between unity and highest difference. (Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 672ff.)

The positing artist appears now to us like the rare intuitive diagnostician who, not knowing precisely why, knows nevertheless *what* makes his patient suffer. Needless to say, all this demands further elaboration, for example, we need to compare Lukács's *ontological-diagnostic*, with his *teleological-prognostic* mode of art. All these questions cannot possibly be answered at once. Instead we shall first attempt to give one coherent illustration for both of the Lukácsian modes. There seems to be a need for it, particularly since Lukács himself, whatever his reasons might have been, fails to give us such an illustration. Showing in addition the teleological aspect of the same example will also help us to improve our delineation of its ontological aspect.¹ This time we shall choose an example from literature which, of course, displays a different dialectic of determinacy and indeterminacy than the marble of Phidias.² A work of literature cannot possibly exhibit and contain the structure of the representative arts, that is a determined *without* and an undetermined *within*, viz., the explicit and concrete shape of what it represents, and the implicit forces which it displays through its compository relations.³ The medium

¹ In the next chapter (d) of this thesis we shall deal with Lukács's limited hints.

² Cf. p. 18 of this thesis.

³ Lukács employs sometimes also the terms *explicit* and *implicit*; e.g., cf. vol. 11, p. 724 or vol. 12, p. 159.

of literature is obviously language and an author's "art of words" [*Wortkunst*] displays and utilizes a different structure of determinacy and indeterminacy. Literature displays and uses the difference between *Vorstellung* and *Begriff*, between *representation* and *concept*.¹ Almost needless to say, it is the representation behind each concept which remains implicit--the concept is obviously explicit. We may look up a word in the dictionary and find other concepts which explain this concept; however we have to represent to ourselves [*vorstellen*] what the concept means in order to understand it. In other words, we must imagine the "object" which the concept signifies; we must form an image of it. It is now the author's work which displays and reconciles the precise opposition between the worn-out concepts of our everyday life and the artist's new representation (image) of them. Anticipating one facet of our example we can say that Homer's spontaneous dialectic of the explicit traditional epithet (stock-epithet) and his positing of implicit pictures and sequences make up the texture of that beautiful manifestation of the Trojan War, which we call Homer's *Iliad*.

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 166.

The *Iliad* lends itself particularly well to our purpose. In fact we can find in Lukács's extensive work many short remarks and allusions to Homer's work.¹ One might object to our choice and point out that there is the so-called Homeric question. Especially the *Iliad* has in the past been often criticized. For instance, it has been argued that this poem is the product of a number of poets who, one after the other, patched up his predecessor's quilt, dropping many patches in the course of this procedure.² For the most part, this interpretation has been abandoned today. Besides, Lukács does not support such a view; on the contrary, the *Iliad* represents for him one of the most sublime examples of human art.³ Our illustration will thus primarily aim to illustrate and elucidate the Lukácsian theory.

First we shall attempt to search for Lukács's teleological mode of art and ask ourselves whether Homer

¹ E.g., cf. op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 117, 350, 389, 468ff., 497f., 570, 614, 701, 724f., 743f., 802, 839; vol. 12, pp. 52, 61, 125, 272, 310, 677, 680, 682f., 689, 691, 728, 741, 751f., 769, 801, 832, 837, 868. Moreover, cf. the appendix of this dissertation, pp. 176f.

² E.g., cf. Gilbert Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic*; Oxford Paperback, Oxford University Press, London, 1970; or E. V. Rieu, *The Illiad*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1950.

³ E.g., cf. op. cit., vol. 12, p. 814. Of course, there is also the problem of the historic authenticity of Homer as a person, which is of course, a different question. Lukács maintains that this latter question is a secondary problem.

really selected--"not knowingly, but very aware"--the appropriate content for his epic.¹ Since Homer's subject was traditional, the end was already known to his audience when they sat down to listen to it. Homer was thus at liberty to choose a plot from many possible combinations and, undoubtedly, also took advantage of it. Indeed, he limited his story to a plot which covers merely seven weeks in a war that lasted over a period of ten years. Yet, Homer's freedom of selection does not really explain his choice. He still could have selected a more extensive course of actions than he did; his refusal to include at least the death of Achilles, and perhaps the spectacular end of Troy, is a case in point. What then made Homer choose the particular content that he did? Could it be that his selection represents little else than a product of chance? Apparently we are back at the Homeric question. Yet our problem can be resolved at once, provided we stop for a moment and consider the significance of Homer's choice of hero, viz. his making the defeated Hector, and not the traditional champion Achilles, the true champion of his work. Accepting this view will not only help us to explain the peculiar end of the *Iliad*, but will also enable

¹ Cf. chapter (b) of this thesis.

us to apply the whole of Lukács's two dimensional interpretation of art.

Those intrigued by the Homeric question have sometimes argued that the epic should have ended with Hector's tragic death; they argue that Homer's last two books (xxiii and xxiv) produce an anticlimax.¹ Yet the opposite seems to be the case; Homer's ingenious choice of hero seems to justify fully the specific end of his poem. After showing Hector's tragic efforts, Homer is somehow bound to have Hector's ashes preserved accordingly: "in soft purple cloths and put in a golden chest" (Book xxiv). A deeply humane necessity seems to demand of the poet that he have his hero ensheathed adequately; Homer must, so to speak, fulfill Hector's exemplary fate. Hector's *nomen est omen*: rising to the occasion ("to the law, with which one enters in accord"), *he holds fast to his destiny*. His life and fate turns thus into a "great confession to the immanent omnipotence of man, in mankind" (*nostra causa agitur*).² In short, a man can suffer utter defeat and still be right.³

¹ E.g., I remember vividly W. G. Hardy arguing in his lectures that the plot of the *Iliad* produces an anticlimax and that Homer should have ended his poem with the death of Hector.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 832.

³ Cf. the appendix of this dissertation, p. 177.

After looking through Lukács's teleological telescope, we shall now return to and glance through his ontological lens in order to comprehend what Lukács calls the artist's "unequivocal clarity of positions."¹ Drawing from the vast store of Greek myths and historic traditions, Homer recasts the structure of his content into a miraculous mirror. Of course, we cannot present more than a few conspicuous instances of the ineffable totality of oppositions that are displayed within its poetic texture. Perhaps few things will impress the reader more than Homer's presentation of the traditional gods. His treatment of heaven is probably one of his major changes of the old story of the Trojan war. Homer's drawing of the gods, though ostensibly humorous, has also an ironic effect upon his audience. For instance, note that nearly all of his Olympians enjoy watching and manipulating the cruel spectacle which constitutes for them little more than an entertainment--they have "no punishment to fear" (Book xxii). Surely, the Homeric gods compare somewhat unfavourably with their traditional image.²

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 744.

² Lukács stresses repeatedly Homer's "decisive secularity" and says that Homer transfers the gods onto a "secular plane." Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 117, 701, 743; vol. 12, pp. 272, 680, 682f., 741, 751, 868.

Nonetheless, we must not pass lightly over Homer's continuous employment of the honorific epithets that he attributes to his gods. These adjectives often sound insincere and seem hardly compatible with Homer's character-drawing of the gods. Yet Homer's stock-epithets appear to be aesthetically essential according to the Lukácsian theory. That is to say, Homer was not simply negligent in retaining the stock-epithet in his work. In his aesthetic awareness, he employed it for his ontological positing in order to reflect accurately one of the most significant tensions of his time, i.e., that between the awakening rationalism of the Greeks of the city state and their traditional mythology. Homer's representation of the gods consists thus in his juxtaposing of his immediate and implicit presentation (image) of the gods *and* their traditional and explicit concepts.¹

Homer's positing embodies, preserves and reveals an important episode within the history of the human race, i.e., the tension between the life of the Greeks as it really was and their *myth* of their transcendental gods.² Probably without being aware of it, Homer created thus the foundation for a subsequent historical process, i.e.,

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 166ff.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 614; vol. 12, p. 677.

the gradual de-mythologizing of the Greek *Weltanschauung*.

Beside his new and original presentation of the gods, Homer's character-drawing of the Greek and Trojan heroes represents the other striking example for Lukács's ontological mode of art. At first glance, Homer's positing of the human characters appears to resemble closely his positing of the gods. To begin with, he juxtaposes his immediate drawing with the traditional clichés. For instance, take the sordid quarrel between the "noble son of Atreus," Agamemnon, and the "excellent" Achilles (Book i) and compare Homer's realistic presentation of the sinister characters of Agamemnon and Achilles with the honorific epithets that he attributes to them simultaneously. As with the positing of the gods, his presentation of his human types contradicts his employment of their clichés. However, Homer's positing of man proves to be far more complex than his presentation of the gods. That is to say, Homer is now not content with the mere positing between the realistic presentation of human characters and their traditional concepts, but introduces an additional differentiation *within* the range of human types. Homer changes thus the characters of the traditional heroes, especially that of Achilles and Hector. One by one, we are able to discern among Homer's Greeks as well as

among his Trojans a whole range of types of behaviour-- each of them representing a unique equation between the two antagonistic forces of man's self-interest and his society.¹ Thus we can align all the Greeks from the monomaniac figures of Achilles and Agamemnon to the sincere characters of Patroclus and Diomedes, and likewise the Trojans from such dubious types as Paris and Dolon to the attractive characters of Polydamas and Hector.² In conclusion we might say, Homer's varied differentiation of human types creates a dense fabric of aesthetic positions, namely, the identity of the Homeric representation of the true hero and his cliché on the one hand, and the gap between the Homeric representation of the dubious hero and his cliché. Indeed, Homer's positing of the heroic types reveals and reflects the other great tension of his age, viz. the tragic tension which arose from the clash of feudal prerogatives with the interest of the whole community.

Probably for the first time in human history, Homer's *Iliad* displays the two emerging basic tensions of his time: the opposition of rationalism and myth on the one hand, and the tension between the individual and his society on the other hand. To wit, Homer reflects his

¹ Lukács maintains that Homer's astounding variety of characters results from the poet's skill for casting types "through contrast." Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 496ff.; vol. 12, p. 52.

² For instance, it appears inconceivable to us that the Homeric Hector could have eloped with Helen had he a chance to do so.

fellow Greeks as they really existed, namely as all men must, within their *unexchangeable* situation; Homer is the mirror of an age--"a God gave him to say what man does suffer."

Homer's positing, though reflecting the real structure of Greek life in all its peculiarity, does not leave any doubt about his own views. To wit, each of his many positions pronounces his point of view with elemental partiality. Consider his representation of Hector when leaving his troops in order to marshal the religious fervour of the Trojan elders and women:

With this, Hector of the flashing helmet
went off towards the town. As we walked,
the dark leather rim of his bossed shield
tapped him above and below, on the ankles
and on the back of the neck. (Book vi)

Homer's picture of Hector striding towards Troy, presents far more than it apparently describes. The close-up of Hector's body striving against the unwieldy shield, creates an intimate, but indeterminate picture of his inexorable resolution to defend his right--he works like a Trojan to achieve his goal of freedom. No doubt Homer's rhythmic image of human endeavour reveals not only the eye, but also the mind of the great artist. Notwithstanding his successful image of Hector's determination, the poet of

the *Iliad* finds it still necessary to adorn his vivid image with a traditional epithet (i.e., "Hector of the flashing helmet"). Hitherto, all sorts of explanations have been given for Homer's apparent wholesale use of stock-epithets, but no explanation seems to satisfy us more than Lukács's ontological mode of art. That is to say, Lukács's theory justifies fully the concept (the epithet) as an important component of all artistic positing. Indeed, its presence is necessary in order to contribute to the final reconciliation, a "last aesthetical overlapping" with Homer's presentation [*Vorstellung*].¹ His simultaneous positing of both, the explicit and worn-out concept and his new and implicit representation turns into a beautiful manifestation of an intensive infinity which signifies the totality of all hidden laws.² Homer's representation of his hero's endeavours reveals thus the ineffable meaning of Hector's life and death--"beauty is truth, truth beauty." Homer's reconciliation attaches thus new life and meaning to the old epithet: it throws new light upon Hector's helmet. Of course, our last example represents only one instance within the complete reconciliation that is displayed

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 672ff., 675.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 154f.

throughout the inexhaustible whole which we call the *Iliad*.¹ Its ultimate syntony permeates the whole texture of Homer's transfiguration. Human existence gains thus an ineffable meaning which it cannot possibly achieve in life.²

Our example represents however a simplification of Lukács's difficult reflection theory of art. Actually, Lukács makes it more difficult for us to separate clearly his two basic modes in art. He does little to elucidate the connexion between the two. In fact he differentiates explicitly between them only once, and even then in a rather complex, if not, wholly ambiguous way. We have no other choice, but to return to the few passages which we have quoted above.³ In these passages, Lukács defines each of his two modes in a dualistic fashion; in detail, he differentiates on the one hand between man's (ia) fate and (ib) soul [*Innerlichkeit*], and on the other

¹ Probably nowhere does the *Iliad* reveal such an instance of attunement more readily than in Homer's famous scene of passing Helen [Book iii].

² Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 774. Needless to say that Homer's complete structure of reconciliation constitutes a very complex fabric.

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 740ff. Of course, Lukács emphasizes frequently that the language of art has a dualistic structure, though he seems to avoid clarifying the difference of its two basic aspects.

hand between the artist's (iia) positing and (iib) understanding of man. The two characteristic phases of the teleological mode (ia and ib) consist in the *artistic realization of man's deepest forces*, and the two characteristic phases of Lukács's ontological mode (iia and iib) consist in the artistic reflection of *naked man*.¹ Lukács's phrase *der nackte Mensch* [naked man] sounds rather vague in the original, though less than in the literal translation rendered here. Just the same, Lukács's metaphor does not lend itself to any simple translation. As in the English (and German) idiom "naked fact", the meaning of "naked" approximates in the Lukácsian phrase the ordinary meaning of "plain and unadorned." In other words, Lukács wants to say that the ontological aspect of art reflects man as he really is.

Lukács continues that the first mode of art, the artistic reflection of man's deepest forces, finds its culmination in literature, and the second mode of art, the artistic reflection of "naked man" finds its culmination in the aesthetic language of the great painters and sculptors. Nonetheless, Lukács supplements his differentiation

¹ Ibid.

at once, saying that both modes ultimately belong together; combined they constitute the two aesthetic basic "tendencies which converge in an intensive way; their direction is determined through the consistently anthropomorphizing essence of the aesthetic reflection."¹ Lukács is never very clear about this convergence, although this much is obvious: he wishes to indicate that all works of art contain and display in their structure the tendencies of both modes. This point can also be substantiated through Lukács's choice of hints for his two modes. That is to say, he employs for both modes examples from all fields of art without any apparent distinction.²

Lukács attributes to the teleological mode of aesthetic reflection "ideologic secularity" and to the ontological mode of aesthetic reflection "aesthetic immanence."³ In his particular way, Lukács seems to indicate

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 742.

² E.g., Lukács quotes Keats in order to substantiate certain aspects of the ontological mode (op. cit., vol. 11, p. 530; vol. 12, pp. 668). Actually we might have expected him to use an example from the representative arts, since the ontological mode culminates apparently within these arts and not within literature.

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 741.

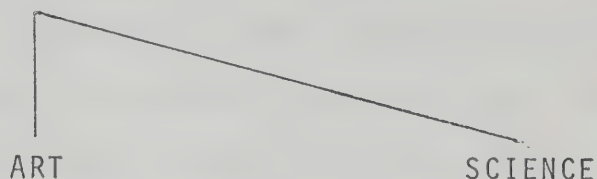
with his definition two things: firstly with mode of "ideologic secularity" that the teleological mode of art reflects man's striving towards the realization of man's true cause, and with mode of "aesthetic immanence" that the ontological mode of art reflects man's historical realization his enchanting although sometimes terrible, situation.¹

A diagram may help us to visualize the complex structure of Lukacs's threefold dualism which, in a nutshell, denotes the whole of his aesthetic theory:²

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 742. We should also mention that Lukacs employs the term *aesthetic immanence* in an ambiguous way. In one passage he refers obviously to both modes of reflection--only one page before the above quoted page--and here he refers with it only to the second, the ontological mode. Fortunately this inconsistency does not really obscure the twofold structure of his theory.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 740ff.

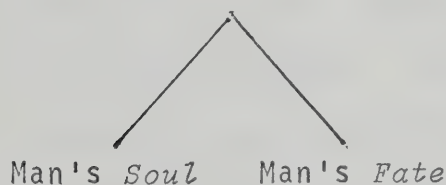
MAN'S TWO ACCURATELY REFLECTING LANGUAGES

(The Two Modes of the *Aesthetic Reflection*)

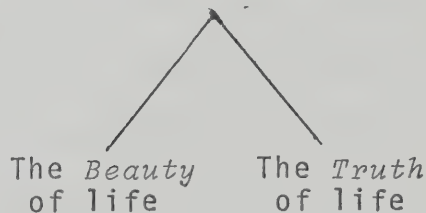
The *Teleological Mode*:
 The artist's Spontaneous
 Dialectic reflects man's
 "Ideologic Secularity,"
 i.e., man's "ardent desire
 for surpassing reality."

The *Ontological Mode*:
 The artist's Spontaneous
 Materialism reflects man's
 "Aesthetic Immanence,"
 i.e., man's "unconditional
 devotion to reality."

The Two Phases of
 "*Ideologic secularity*,"
 i.e., the *Realization* of
 man's "deepest forces,"
 viz. those of "man and
 his fate."



The Two Phases of
 "*Aesthetic Immanence*,"
 i.e., the *Reflection*
 of "naked man," viz.
 the truth and beauty
 of human life.



No doubt, both modes reflect one and the same man; however, there appears to be a significant difference in the perspective of both sides. Lukács differentiates between two ways of aesthetic reflection, namely that which culminates in an "ideologic secularity" (what we call his teleological mode of art), and that which culminates in an "aesthetic immanence" (what we call his ontological mode of art). In short, the teleological mode contains the artistic realization of man and the cognitive aspect displays the artistic reflection of man.¹ The teleological aspect of art contains the artist's work as his symbolic labour (in the form of his spontaneous dialectic) within the development of man. The ontological aspect of art displays the artistic positing (in the form of the artist's spontaneous materialism) as his reflection of man as he really exists. The artist's labour changes the meaning of a caused man into the meaning of man's cause and purpose. The artist's positing reflects an aesthetic reconciliation of the most important oppositions in the context of a specific human situation.

Summing up, we may compare both modes once more and say that the teleological aspect of art contains a welding together of the two Marxian realms of human freedom and necessity; it contains an *artistic prognosis* for

¹ Ibid.

mankind.¹ The ontological aspect on the other hand, seems to display something else, namely the artist's exact positing of a particular man as he exists within the opposing forces of a historic situation, it reveals an *artistic diagnosis* of a specific man within a specific historic situation.

¹ To wit, the artist realizes man's deepest forces (necessity) through *transforming* them into his own (freedom). (E.g., cf. *Capital*, vol. 3; op. cit., p. 820. Here Marx maintains that "the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; . . ." Note that Lukács calls the teleological mode of art its side of *ideologic secularity*.)

(d) LUKÁCS'S CATEGORY OF AESTHETIC INTUITION

Our preceding investigation into the teleological (chapter b) and ontological (chapter c) modes of his aesthetic sphere revealed clearly Lukács's paradoxical notion of aesthetic consciousness: a "not-conscious awareness of the highest degree."¹ This frame of mind characterized both, the artist's choice of content (essential to the teleological mode of art) as well as his "listening" to the sensuous immediacy of this content (essential to the ontological mode of art.) In other words, this consciousness is not only symptomatic of the artist's teleological-behaviouristic choice of his subject matter but also for his ontological-cognitive positing of it. Nevertheless, we must not think that both modes of Lukács's aesthetic reflection are characterized by one and the same consciousness. That is to say, Lukács differentiates actually between two sorts of artistic consciousness.

First, he tells us that the artistic labour represents "an 'unintended' result" of the artist's consciously expressed intentions, and as such, a "general phenomenon

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 612.

of artistic creativity."¹ Referring to his friend, Leo Popper's interpretation of Brueghel's paintings, Lukács employs Popper's description as an example of his concept of compositional discrepancy between the artist's intention and his achievement. Lukács argues that Brueghel consciously never intended to create the particular quality of his pictures. To wit, Brueghel's characteristic quality consists (for Lukács and Popper) in a "unique unity and unresolvable contradiction": the contradictory unity of

(i) the *explicit* content of Brueghel's pictures, viz. "the joyful motely and casually accidental of the most immediate reality of appearances," and

(ii) their *implicit* significance, viz. "the turning-into-the surface of the depicted objects' most essential forces and relations."²

Though obviously producing it, Brueghel never intended to posit the above unity. Consciously, he was "merely devoting himself" to the diverse objects that presented themselves to him.³

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 237.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 676f.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 675.

We can find in Lukács's earlier works -- for instance in one of his critical studies of European literature -- passages which anticipate clearly his complex theory of the artistic consciousness. Lukács writes there about Balzac:¹

Balzac himself considered his novel *The Peasants* to be his most important work. Balzac says of it: ". . . in eight years I laid aside a hundred times and then took to hand again this most important book I want to write . . ."

Yet, for all his painstaking preparation and careful planning, what Balzac really did in this novel was the exact opposite of what he set out to do: what he depicted was not the tragedy of the aristocratic estate but of the peasant smallholding. It is precisely this discrepancy between intention and performance, between Balzac the political thinker and Balzac the author of *La Comédie Humaine* that constitutes Balzac's historical greatness.

Lukács wrote this passage fifteen years before the appearance of his theoretical *magnum opus* yet it contains already the germ of his complex theory of artistic

¹ Georg L., *Studies in European Realism*, Grosset and Dunlap, New York, 1964, p. 21.

consciousness which he later develops in his *Eigenart des Ästhetischen*. Note Lukács stresses on the one hand the great discrepancy between Balzac's conscious intentions and his work and on the other hand, Balzac's long spell of conscious preoccupation with the content of his work.

Lukács's account of the artist's state of mind stresses not only the discrepancy between the artist's awareness and his work, but also the artist's exact awareness of his work's content: an aesthetic consciousness *sui generis*. To support this latter assertion, Lukács quotes from a letter written by van Gogh. This letter contains van Gogh's own account of one of his recently executed paintings, especially his precise description of the objects he depicted, viz. their shapes, colour nuances, and the emotions which they evoke.¹ Lukács points out that this letter indicates van Gogh's uniquely artistic awareness of a multiplicity of interrelations arising from the content of his picture. Lukács concludes that all artistic positing is characterized by such an unfailing exact consciousness "about all sides of the content."² That is to say, all great art is characterized by such an aesthetic exactitude; for instance, "a good sonnet is as

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 94f., 153.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 153. Lukács refers here directly to the artistic consciousness of positing, and particularly to the "most concrete nuances of colouring."

exact as a mathematical derivation -- and just as consciously developed."¹

The apparent clash between these two assertions (viz. that of the discrepancy between the artist's intention and achievement on the one hand and that of an originally artistic exactitude on the other hand) is however resolved in what Lukács calls his "new doctrine of the genius."² By this doctrine Lukács suggests that the contradictory state of the artistic consciousness characterizes a necessary condition of the creative mind.³ This is the case since the artistic consciousness reflects far more than a subjective process. For each aesthetically significant discovery, made by the fully devoted artist, there exists "simultaneously an inseparable something, newly discovered," which stems from the objective reality

¹ Ibid.

² Op. cit., vol. II, pp. 792, 828. We have already referred in the previous two chapters to Lukács's "truly-born great artist" (viz. in connexion with Lukács's doctrine of an adequately reflecting language of art).

³ Op. cit., vol. II, pp. 667f., 676f.; here, Lukács even maintains that such a contradictory consciousness represents only a specific instance of all human "dialectic of intention and achievement."

itself.¹ This discovery, of course, is something of the artist's own objective environment. Each great work of art manifests thus an intimate relation between the artist and the content of his work. Lukács speaks of the content's "appeal to the deeper and more comprehensive personality" of the artist.² Being arrested by the appeal of a "just-so-ness", the artist experiences above all a conflict and contradiction within the "just-so-ness" of his content. However the artist encounters also another conflict: this latter conflict arises between the artist's contradictory content and his homogeneous medium.

It seems not very difficult to us to imagine a simple example. Consider for instance the "contradiction" between the appearance of a disk (sideways), say a puck, and its obvious round form. A painter who chooses to paint this puck will experience two sorts of "contradiction". First, he will encounter the "contradiction" between the different appearances of the puck and then in addition the "contradiction" between the real three-dimensional thing and his two-dimensional canvass. That is to say, the artist encounters not only the problem of depicting the "contradictory" aspects of his content, but also the difficult

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 667.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 676.

task of transforming these aspects within the restricted possibilities of his medium.

Summarizing Lukács's theory of artistic awareness, we can say that the contradictory consciousness of the great artist reflects a complex chain of conflicts within the artist's aesthetic experience as well as between such an experience and his efforts of positing his experience.¹ Just the same, we must not conclude that such an artistic "dialectic of intention and achievement" will result in a contingent product; Lukács seems to hold the opposite to be true.²

To exemplify his whole conception of aesthetic intuition, Lukács gives us two examples.³ His first and somewhat extensive example, Brueghel's paintings, we have already outlined. These pictures reveal for Lukács a unique

¹ Ibid. Lukács insists that the artistic consciousness is merely a specific instance of all human "dialectic of intention and achievement."

² Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 676.

³ Ibid. Lukács's second example is Rembrandt whose art displays another unification of the immediately appearing reality, though this is a "psychic-moral stuff", i.e. "an endless chain of the deepest and most horrible tragedies."

unity which represents the most significant conflicts that took place within Brueghel's life-time. Brueghel himself intended to grasp objective reality *as such*, but what he really reflected was something else.¹ Without really knowing what he did, Brueghel posited an exemplaric reflection of the "deepest ideological expression . . . : the paradigm of (a) man-related, yet objectively founded unity of the world."² Brueghel's not intended paradigm displays the "contradictory unity" of:

- (i) *a man-related, intended, and explicit component* which resulted from Brueghel's vivid attention to the definite immediacy of all the diverse "kinds of particular substances" on his content, viz. the "joyful motley and the casual accidental of the most immediate reality," and
- (ii) *an objectively founded, unintended, and implicit component* which Brueghel achieved without knowing it, viz. an indefinite "turning-into-the-surface of the depicted objects' most essential forces and relations": "a uniquely united *Urstoff* [principle element]" which displays the

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 676.

² Ibid.

"co-operation of solid substantiality and air."¹

Having limited the intended-explicit and the unintended-implicit component of a work to the mind of the artist, Lukács comes to an "unavoidable conclusion", namely "that the foundation of the artist's objective work problem is in human substantiality."² That is to say, Lukács argues that it is possible, and characteristic for "the deeper and more comprehensive personality" of the great artist, to grasp and posit the historically objective tensions of his time, which the artist himself cannot fully understand.³ That is to say, Brueghel was hardly aware of the objective structure which he created.

And yet, it was Brueghel himself who grasped and posited it. How could he do this? And how does Lukács account for Brueghel's hidden comprehension? Lukács's answer to all this is very complex. One might say that his *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* constitutes a great attempt to demonstrate this point; at least his choice of motto for his *opus* does support such an interpretation: *Sie wissen es nicht, aber sie tun es* -- They do not know

¹ Ibid.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, 790; rendering Lukács's term *Substantialität* with *substantiality* appears to me more adequate than the translation "substantialness" as employed in Agnes Heller's essay (Op. cit., p. 87).

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 667f., 676f.

it, but they do it.¹ In a later dialogue about the meaning of his *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, Lukács suggests that this book should perhaps have another title; more precisely, "one should call it: *The Position of the Aesthetic Principle within the Frame of Man's Intellectual Activities*."²

Lukács asserts a specific principle of aesthetic cognition, a hidden rational process, insisting that such a process characterizes the paradoxical state of consciousness of all great artists.³ He argues that this process represents merely "a qualitative culmination of a general problem of life."⁴ All aesthetic intuition is thus interpreted as a specific sort of cognition.⁵ Consequently, Lukács asserts a specific "category of inherency with the dialectic of the phenomena."⁶ Much of that which now follows will be devoted to the discussion of this specific kind of aesthetic conceptualization.

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 12; vol. 12, p. 9; my translation. Lukács adopts this motto from Marx, but does not mention the source.

² Cf. the appendix of this dissertation, p. 162.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 790.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Eg. cf. op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 45f.

⁶ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 757. Cf. also pp. 754ff, 758ff, 794, 812, 814; vol 12, pp. 327ff.

How do certain aspects of reality "inhere" in the artist's "substantiality"? How do these aspects get into his mind and body without the artist's knowing them?

In order to substantiate the existence of his aesthetic category of inherency, Lukács introduces many arguments. We have already alluded to Lukács conviction that the Pavlovian studies support such an assertion.¹ Furthermore, Lukács thinks that all forms of human intuition -- aesthetic intuition is only one of them -- *are nothing else but a suddenly growing awareness of a cognitive process which has been going on without interruption.*² Lukács indicates various examples from human and animal life in order to support this theory. For instance, consider man's ability to grasp a certain situation, his knowledge of man, his art of diagnosis (medical and other), his sense for love, tact, silence -- and last but not least, his understanding of the language of art.³ We must however admit that Lukács himself avoids using the term "intuition" to characterize his conception of aesthetic cognition; he prefers to speak of the "convergency of inherency with

¹ Cf. pp. 24f of this thesis.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 45f. Especially consider footnote 1 on p. 45.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11 chapter x; vol. 12, chapter xi.

the dialectic of the phenomena."¹ Lukács probably shuns the term "intuition" in order to avoid being misinterpreted. He seems to feel that someone might think that his aesthetic language reflects, say some theory of innate ideas, or some esoteric form of a priori knowledge. And Lukács obviously wishes to say something quite different, namely that the language of art *reflects* reality.

Here we encounter again the whole range of problems connected with human language. What is language? And is art also a language? Of course, many philosophers will deny that art is a language. After the method of G. E. Moore they will most likely greet Lukács's assertion with the traditional "gasp of incredulity".² This and similar attitudes help however very little the understanding of art. One does not have to agree with Lukács's "content" of artistic language in order to realize that at least some artists claim to *say* something and at least some people claim to *understand* what the artist has to say. It seems to us, whatever the artist has to say, it must be something

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 757.

² J. M. Keynes, *Two Memoirs*, Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1949; *My early Beliefs*; p. 86.

which other people understand--which makes sense to other people. Of course, we know also about the frustrated artist who felt misunderstood and we know about audiences who could not, or would not, understand a certain artist, or a certain work of art. Yet the very existence of this problem of misunderstanding seems to support the definition of art as a human language. Of course, there arises also the problem of agreement about that which the artist has to say; surely people often disagree among themselves about the meaning of a specific work of art. Yet even this objection does not really hold water, since those who understand the language of art, tend to agree among themselves that, say Shakespeare has something worthwhile to say in his plays. Besides, there arises also the problem of universality. Some people seem to be inclined to think that if art were really a language then all people, at least all of our contemporaries, should understand what an artist has to say. And this is not the case today. Again it would not be very difficult to find a rational answer to this objection, however we shall return to Lukács and his own argument.

To prove his point Lukács does not even hesitate to abandon the discursive method of traditional philosophy

and adopts a rather unusual way of quoting literature. This novel method can hardly be ignored, since it occupies too prominent a place within his argumentation. Our need for a better insight into the Lukács's thought demands a discussion of his unorthodox argument.¹ For instance, after having claimed that the objective components of a work of art have their origin in the artist's personality, Lukács refers us at once to Goethe's poem *Ultimatum*. Maintaining that this poem "indicates strikingly . . . the centre of the problem," Lukács quotes the first of Goethe's three stanzas:²

Thus for the last time do I say:
Nature has neither core nor shell;
You! test your own self thus most:
Are you a shell or are you the core?

To elucidate the meaning of the poem Lukács adds two additional lines from the third and last stanza:

Is not the core of nature
In the heart of men?³

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 790.

² Ibid.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 791; my translation. Also cf. J. W. Goethe, *Gesamtausgabe*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 163.

Simply accepting "Goethe's ingenious hint," Lukács adopts the poet's metaphorical picture of man for his category of inherency.¹ In other words, he takes the Goethean concept of human substantiality and incorporates it into his theory of aesthetic reflection.

We must interrupt for a time our investigation into the Lukácsian category of inherency and divert our attention towards the Lukácsian method of incorporating literature into his philosophical argument. Of course, literary passages have served as illustrations in aesthetical writing before, though Lukács does not often quote after this fashion. Astounding as it appears to us, he seems to regard certain works of literature as some sort of cognitive source; for instance, his employment of certain stanzas and lines from Goethe's poetry.²

Furthermore, Lukács does not confine himself to Goethe's poetry alone, but enlists also the occasional support of poets like Keats, Brecht, George, Rilke and Hölderlin.³ Anybody acquainted with contemporary thought may find it reminiscent of Heidegger's method of "listening

¹ Ibid.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 790-994, 815-823.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 130, 313, 530, 818, 825; vol. 12, pp. 179, 638, 668f., 789, 855, 869f.

to decisive articulation(s) of human existence."¹ Indeed, both philosophers employ sometimes the same "ontological mouthpiece" (viz. the same poet). For instance, Heidegger engages also Hölderlin, George, Rilke and Goethe.² Just the same, both philosophers differ considerably in their application of this method as well as in their efforts to justify this method. Here we shall abstain from any further comparison, though we ought to indicate that it will prove difficult for the reader to discover in Lukács's many-faceted work any conclusive argument for his quasi-ontological method; however we do find the casual remark, though this will hardly suffice. Take his assertion that "Goethe is the sole great exception within the history of aesthetics" who understood the central problem of categories in aesthetics.³ Goethe may well have fully apprehended the aesthetic problem of inherency, but we are still entitled to question Lukács's employment of poetry for his discursive argument. How does Lukács account for his hermeneutic method? Is there any room left for it in his doctrine? Is it really possible for Lukács to cite

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*; Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1958; pp. 112ff; my translation.

² Martin Heidegger, *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*; Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1951; Holzwege; Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1957.

³ Op. cit., fol. 12, p. 266

aesthetic language in support of his discursive argument? Lukács discriminates between scientific and aesthetic language; surely aesthetic language can hardly substitute for rational language in defining aesthetic language--even if the aesthetic language, say a poem, were to posit its own cognitive adequacy. Surely such a method seems to involve the fallacy of *petitio principii*.

Behind Lukács's questionable method looms another serious problem, i.e. his haphazard way of citing single lines, or linking short passages from different poems; sometimes he even fails to account for his source.¹ Take Goethe's "law to which one enters in accord."² Lukács does neither quote its context, nor its title, nor does he hint where we could possibly find it.³ Surely, his way of quoting must invite criticism and surely, Lukács must have been aware of the fact that particularly Goethe's immense production has been misused many times in a similar casual way, misrepresenting Goethe for all sorts of purposes. Here, we do not question Lukács's intellectual integrity, but we cannot without reservation, accept his method of quoting.

¹ Op. cit., e.g. cf. vol. 11, pp. 766, 790-794, 817, 821.

² This thesis p. 30.

³ Viz.: Goethe, *Gesamtausgabe*, op. cit., vol. 2., *Poems, God and the World*.

Returning to our investigation into the Lukács¹ean category of inherency, we recall once more Goethe's concluding passage which (to Lukács) indicates strikingly the centre of the problem of inherency:¹

Is not the core of nature

In the heart of man?

As we have hinted before, Lukács quotes additional passages from Goethe in order to prove his point. However, all of them express one and the same idea, namely man's complex, but intimate interrelation with his world.² Lukács himself summarizes his diverse quotations of Goethe, saying that this poet *equates* [*simultan setzen*] "the core-existence of [certain] men with [man's] defetishizing eye for the world, [and] the shell-existence [of others] with [their] submission to the fetishizing prejudices [of the environment]". This differentiation constitutes for Lukács "the centre of the whole complex of [aesthetic] problems."³ Adapting the Goethean picture of human substantiality to his own assertion of an aesthetic category of inherency, Lukács maintains that only such an ethical substantiality makes the artist "worthy and therefore able to reflect the world adequately."⁴

¹ This thesis, p. 91.

² Op. cit.- vol. 11, p. 790.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 793.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 791.

Goethe's differentiation between a human core-existence and a shell-existence becomes thus an important criterion for Lukács's doctrine of the great artist. However, if we read Goethe's little poem *Ultimatum* carefully then we realize at once that Goethe's *Ultimatum* could hardly be meant to address the relatively small group of artists alone; surely it is directed towards every reader, be he artist or not. Besides, Goethe would have indicated with his title that his *Ultimatum* is addressed to the artist only; he might have called his poem *Ultimatum to the Artist*, or something similar to this. Surely, Goethe's differentiation between man's core and shell seems to contrast man's fundamental attitude towards life with man's ostensible behaviour, i.e. man's moral determination with man's overt conduct. Rather abruptly, we find ourselves confronted with Lukács's concept of ethical substance which seems to contribute decisively to the artistic personality. Before investigating any further into the nature of this apparently ethical prerequisite for the great artist, we should try to follow Lukács's argument.

"*Speaking ethically*," Lukács argues that the artistic "elevation (to the great master) is the way which proceeds from talent to genius."¹ In his peculiar language,

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 677; italics mine.

Lukács seems to say that all great artist must acquire, or possess, the proper ethical substantiality (a "core-existence") in order to be able to create a great work of art.¹ Being an ethically amalgamated looking glass which reflects his, and our world, the great artist does more than hold up a mirror: Lukács quotes Heine who considered Goethe to be such a looking glass, viz. a *worthy and therefore fit* [*würdig und darum fähig*] mirror of the world.² In short, the artist's ethical attitude towards his world becomes a *conditio sine qua non* for his aesthetic achievement. Lukács never tells us *why* this is the case; he simply tells us that it is. However, we should beware of any narrow interpretation of Lukács's assertion. Certainly he does not say that the great artist could never be, say, a disloyal friend, a nasty master, or a thief. It seems Lukács wishes to differentiate between the artist's ethical attitude towards certain aspects of his many-faceted life and his unreserved good will towards the whole content of his profession. For instance, it is a well known fact that Beethoven "mistreated" his servants precisely because he

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 791.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 792.

was "too much" concerned about music and "not enough" about the well-deserved night-rest of his maid-servants.

Unfortunately, Lukács never fully elaborates on the precise relation between ethics and aesthetics, though he does occasionally refer to the field of ethics.¹ According to Lukács, the social but individual man realizes in the moral act the barrier (the difference) between his own existence (his soul) and his specific situation (his fate) *in persona*. That is to say, the moral core of his character results from the nature of his intentions and achievements, as well as from his way of reconciling the inevitable difference between his intentions and actual achievements. If we compare the medium of the moral act with the artistic media, then we realize at once their great difference. The medium of the artist, say the marble of Phidias, is always some objective "material" which, *for the sake of an audience, displays* the precise language of the difference and unity of its explicit-implicit significance. The medium of man's moral behaviour however, is always an individual, (though socially influenced) man; his particular life and relatively hidden situation

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 783f.; vol. 12, pp. 234ff., 237ff., 835ff., 846-856.

could hardly become the subject matter for human language. In fact, we are somewhat inclined to distrust somebody who performs a moral act ostentatiously. Yet it is interesting to note that Lukács is prepared to maintain that even "human life achieves sometimes, in certain historical moments such an importance that it becomes similar to a work of art."¹ Lukács refers us in this connection to the lives of Socrates and Jesus.² Quite literally, Lukács speaks of "ethics turned into flesh and blood."³ However Lukács also finds it necessary to remark that only his projected work on ethics will provide his final views on this topic.⁴ Hence he speaks only vaguely about what he calls ethical substance.

Be all this as it may, our investigation into the ethical prerequisite for his aesthetic category of inherency hardly yielded any new evidence for the existence of this category.⁵ Finally, we should also mention that

¹ Cf. the appendix of this thesis; pp. 181f.

² Ibid.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 791.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 224f.

⁵ Within the framework of this chapter, we cannot pursue any further investigation into the ethical linkage of all aesthetic language.

Lukács argues also in a more traditional way (than we have dealt with above), for his category of aesthetic intuition. Referring to Aristotle and Kant, Lukács simply denotes inherency as being the "category of forming."¹ That is to say, Lukács simply declares that this category denotes "the conceptual grasping of reality"--it expresses "in thought . . . the positing of the relation of independency within higher forms of interconnections," viz. [i] "the dialectic of the relative absorption" of independency within the higher forms of interconnections, and [ii] "the relative preservation" of these higher forms of interconnections within independency.² Whatever the full meaning of this assertoric definition may be, it certainly refers to *reality as the content of inherency*. That is to say, the category of inherency must refer to something, i.e. something that inheres. An investigation into the Lukácsian conception of the content of "artistic substantiality", may help us to elucidate Lukács's aesthetic category of inherency.

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 746.

² Ibid., italics mine. Lukács's sentence constitutes a long and difficult passage; its apparently vague meaning cannot be understood easily: "Wir haben gesehen, dass diese Kategorie im begrifflichen Erfassen der Wirklichkeit die Bestimmung des Verhältnisses von Selbständigkeit innerhalb höher gearteter Zusammenhänge, die Dialektik des relativen Aufgehens in diese, die relative Aufbewahrung in jener gedanklich zum Ausdruck bringt."

(e) LUKÁCS'S CATEGORY OF AESTHETIC APPEARANCES

One of Lukács's great difficulties consists in demonstrating satisfactorily to his readers that the content of artistic language reflects more than merely an emotional reaction of the artist to his objective environment. In other words, Lukács is forced to substantiate that the subject matter of artistic reflection contains also an objective element. Probably in order to facilitate his argument, Lukács asserts the existence of a special category which he calls the category of specificity. That is to say, Lukács assumes that the whole artistic practice stands under the sign of this category.¹ Ultimately, Lukács bases his argument for this category upon the Marxist teleology of the forms of metabolism, their realization, and the development of man via his labour.² Nonetheless a part of Lukács's

¹ Op. cit. vol. 12, p. 266. Consider the whole of Chapter xi and xii. I follow the translation employed in Agnes Heller's essay (op. cit.) and render *Besonderheit* also with *specificity*. Moreover, note the title of Chapter xi: *The Category of Specificity*.

² This doctrine in turn he connects with Pavlov's dualistic reflexology. Cf. pp. 24, 88 of this thesis.

arguments for specificity may well stand by itself. These arguments can be understood -- at least up to a certain point -- without considering all their implicit assertions. This seems to hold especially for some of his arguments about an artistic field of mediation between man as subject and his objective environment; Lukács calls this field a field of play [*Spielraum*] for "the transformation of reality into a fertile field of human activity" [*fruchtbringende Tätigkeitsfeld der Menschen*].¹ To be sure, Lukács's *Spielraum* of specificity is more extensive than his aesthetic sphere. In fact this *Spielraum* makes up the whole field of mediation between man and his environment (and thus also between the artist and his world). Lukács argues that the necessity for such a field of mediation will be understood, if we look at everyday life. He argues, for instance, that "life is not a game of chess in which we can ponder over each best move as long as we please."² Hence man must, *volens volens* use his intuition in his specific situation, a mode of reflection which, according to Lukács, is not at all irrational. As we have indicated before, Lukács thinks that all forms of human intuition are nothing else but a suddenly growing awareness of a cognitive process

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 615. Cf. also vol. 12, pp. 255f., 158, 261, 263f., 266.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 45.

which has been subconsciously going on without interruption.¹ This includes not only aesthetic intuition, but many forms of human intuitive behaviour. Lukács suggests that the full realization of the wide diffusion of all this intuitive behaviour makes us aware of a paradoxical situation, i.e. "life and thought work incessantly within the category of specificity," but "the thinking consciousness in science, dialectics, etc. . . becomes principally arrested at the extremes: universality and particularity."² And he goes on to say that "thinking consciousness restricts itself to these extreme forms of thought, distorting thus the most important facts."³ Being a Marxist, Lukács wishes apparently to say that the theoretical language of the scientist ("thinking consciousness") must necessarily reflect the dialectical structure of objective reality. Lukács seems to think that any scientific reflection of reality must necessarily exhibit the distinctive signs of its dialectical structure: universality and particularity. In other words, all scientific reflection is mainly

¹ Cf. pp. 81f of this thesis.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 224. From the consecutive text we can easily substantiate that Lukács refers with *thinking consciousness* "not only to logic and methodology, but . . . also to psychology." (On the whole, Lukács seems only interested in the various forms of intuitive behaviour in order to demonstrate that all artistic language represents a specific form of such a behaviour).

³ Ibid.

concerned with particulars or with universals. For instance, an astronomer may make a particular planet the object of his study, and a physicist may research the question of whether the world is really made up of quarks (smallest, indivisible particles) or not. We cannot discuss the complex topic of scientific reflection within the confines of this paper; however we should realize that many modern scientists would reject the Lukácsian assertion of the dialectical nature of reality.

To complete this initial analysis, we recall that Lukács juxtaposes and contrasts the scientific language of particulars and universals with all the other languages ("life and thought") which "work incessantly within the category of specificity."¹ Indeed it is this category which opens the artistic field [*Spielraum*] of mediation between man as subject and his objective environment.² Lukács emphasizes that this field of free play "is not merely a way from particularity to universality, but the necessary mediation between the particular and the universal."³ He explains that the dialectical nature

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 224.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 255f., 258, 261, 263f.

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 196. Lukács points out that it was Hegel's merit to have discovered this "mediating necessity" as an essential aspect of human language.

of reality forces us to think within the *Spielraum* of specificity; objective reality forces upon us such a "necessary mediation."¹ As with our foregoing account of Lukács's interpretation of scientific language, we cannot possibly discuss the Lukácsian definition at any length. Again it should be obvious to us that Lukács has difficulties in demonstrating that objective reality as such is dialectically connected; surely one could argue that it is man's language which is dialectically connected and not reality as such.

Be all this as it may, Lukács assumes that mankind developed in art a specific organ which represents a most important human field [*Spielraum*] of mediation; indeed this field contains especially "those essential signs [*Wesenszeichen*] of the objective reality (of the socialized man)" that assert themselves elementally.² As Lukács puts it, the necessity of art, (i.e., the necessity of a "dialectical differentiation and interconnection" of "particularity, specificity and universality") is

¹ Ibid.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 225.

a fact [*gilt*] and "asserts itself elementally in each posited articulated objectivity."¹

A look at one of Lukács's earlier critical studies will not only help us to understand Lukács's category of specificity, but also demonstrate that Lukács's theoretical thought seems to be consistent with what he has to say in his earlier works of literary criticism. Comparing the artistic language of Stendhal and Victor Hugo, Lukács says:

The romantic cult of passion, the romantic worship of the Renaissance all spring from this grief, from this desperate search for inspiring examples of great passions which could be opposed to the paltry, mercenary present. But the only true fulfiller of this romantic longing is Stendhal himself, *precisely*

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 250. It is obvious from the context that Lukács refers here with *dialectical differentiation and interconnection* to the artistic articulation and not to scientific language.

*because he nevertheless always remained faithful to realism. He translates into reality all that Victor Hugo tried to express in many of his plays and novels. But Victor Hugo gave us only abstract skeletons dressed in the purple mantle of rhetoric while Stendhal created flesh and blood, the destinies of real men and women.*¹

That is to say, Stendhal succeeds in articulating a necessary and true mediation between the "particularity" of his characters and their "universal" aspirations, whereas Victor Hugo's language fails to posit such an interconnected specificity--as is the case with the language of science--Hugo's language becomes arrested at the logical extremes: universality and particularity. In principle, Lukács's criticism of Zola is the same as his criticism of Hugo, although Zola succeeds (according to Lukács) more than Hugo in reflecting the particularity of his characters; Lukács maintains:

Zola depicts with naturalist fidelity the biological and "psychological" entity of the average human being and this preserves him from treating his characters as arbitrarily as Victor

¹ *Studies in European Realism*; op. cit.; Balzac and Stendhal, p. 81; italics mine.

Hugo. But on the one hand this method sets his characterization very narrow limits and on the other hand the combination of two contradictory principles, i.e., of naturalism and romantically rhetorical monumentality again i.e. as with Hugo produce a Hugoan discrepancy between "particular characters and a "universal" environment which Zola cannot overcome.¹

In his theoretical presentation, Lukács speaks first of a dialectic of the appearances, but soon we discover that it is an *inner* dialectic of "appearance and essential being [*Wesen*] that presses [*treibt*] from a merely immediate starting point towards the revelation of the intimately connected objectivity of both"--viz. the appearances and the genius at work.² It is precisely to this essentially interlinked form of the appearances that Lukács attributes ineffability in the Goethean sense.³ In order to explain his point, Lukács makes especially much of one of Goethe's

¹ Ibid; The Zola Centenary, p. 95; italic mine.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 757. Lukács even adds that the same process represents also the way of the "depicting and objective dialectic" of science.

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 154ff.

aphorisms.¹ Goethe declares in this aphorism that the artistic language "transforms the appearance into an idea, the idea into a picture--but in such a way that the idea within the picture remains throughout efficacious and yet unattainable; thus it is ineffable, even if it were expressed in all tongues of the world."² Lukács returns again and again to this Goethean concept. Yet, in spite of adopting Goethe's conception of art as a paradigm of an ineffable meaning, Lukács is still prepared to defend the concept of ineffability against any irrationalistic interpretation. A look at his interpretation of ineffability may help us to bring out the hidden structure of his aesthetics. That is to say, Lukács does not only maintain that ineffability constitutes "an essential form of the appearances [phenomena]," but also insists that we must not confuse the ineffable with the irrational, since ineffability "expresses a behaviour which, similar to genuine science, is also directed towards the conquest of the objective reality."³

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 154; cf. also pp. 156ff, 159, 729, 731.

² Op. cit., vol. 21; *Maximen und Reflexionen*, p. 124, #1112; my translation.

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 154; cf. also pp. 140f., 155f., 157ff., 169ff. It may be recalled that Lukács also defines art as "the deepest paradigm of the man-related, yet objectively founded unity of the world."

He explains that such a behaviour has both: "the inner possibility and . . . also the task to discover new sides, and new moments of reality."¹ Harnessing Goethe once more to his argument, Lukács quotes his poet in order to support the argument that specific reality is a sort of revelation: "the beautiful is a manifestation of hidden laws of nature, which would have remained eternally hidden without its [beauty's] appearance."² In other words, it is the "ineffability of the particular in its immediacy" which becomes an invitation of its mediation.³ Thus any true work of art becomes (as such a mediation) also a *cancellation* of a respectively immediate particularity; however, a cancellation "in which the moment of *preservation*, and of *elevation-upon-a-higher-level* [*auf-ein-höheres-Niveau-Heben*], works in an overlapping way."⁴ In other words, all language of art transforms the immediacy of the sensuous certain into a new and higher defined immediacy.⁵

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 154.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 154f.

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 198ff.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 199; italics mine.

⁵ Ibid.

To be sure, we have already encountered this Lukács¹ conception as the dialectic of the appearances.¹ Just the same, we are now in a better position to comprehend its structure. That is to say, we realize that the "ineffability of the particular in its immediacy" manifests itself to the artist and makes him thus transform its immediacy of the sensuous certain into a "higher form of immediacy."² Finally, we should also indicate that Goethe's account of "ineffability" characterizes especially the inexhaustible possibilities of interpreting a true work of art. Lukács tells us so in his peculiar way: Goethe's maxim about the ineffability of the artistic image represents "at the bottom [*im Grunde genommen*] a philosophical formula for the extensive and intensive infinity of all real objects, out of which it necessarily follows that they are inexhaustible" in terms of any scientific language.³ Only the language of the great artist seems to reflect within the inexhaustible complexity of their specific field of mediation the inexhaustible "intensive infinity" of objective reality. A look at one

¹ Cf. pp.15ff of this thesis. That is to say, we are once more reminded of Hegel's system and its method of *sublation* through dialectical negation.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 198f.

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 731.

of Lukács's earlier critical works may help us again to understand what Lukács means; for instance he writes about Tolstoy's language

In reality the interconnexions and relationships in Tolstoy's novels are much more intricate and varied than merely such points of contact between objective happenings and the subjective experience of the characters . . . , such points of intersection also mark more or less important turning-points of the whole story. Every phase of such crises, every thought and emotion of the characters is *inseparably intertwined* with the turning-point, with the event which provides the opportunity for the crises in the story.¹

One would now expect that such a specific aspect of objectivity, viz. the inexhaustible intensive infinity of the respective appearances, determines the artistic articulation. This is not the case; throughout the Lukácsian text we can find references to a differentiation between the origin of, and necessity for an aesthetic articulation of these essential signs of objective reality. Take for instance, his remark that the whole system of

¹ *Studies in European Realism*; op. cit; Tolstoy and the Development of Realism, p. 154; italics mine.

aesthetic reflection would never have developed for the mere purpose of expressing "the unique particularity of the immediate ensemble." He goes on to explain that man's supplementary need for an aesthetic reflection "originates only for the purpose of rendering clearly conceivable, the sense and meaning of the very uniqueness of man."¹ Lukács emphasizes quite frequently man's "deepest need for an adequate language of art."² Thus he argues that this specific need results from man's division of labour into two modes of attention, i.e., consciousness and selfconsciousness.³ In his consciousness--apparently man's scientific mode of approach--man conquers and reflects the world as it is; he transforms the objective world into his world. Nonetheless, man creates through his conquest also "the actually real *Spielraum* for the transformation of reality into a fertile field of man's activities," i.e., a fertile Mesopotamia between the grey stream of an indifferent scientific language and the casual flow of everyday life.⁴

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 182.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 183; moreover cf. vol. 11, pp. 543ff., 615, 626, 744, 757; vol. 12, pp. 182, 191, 196, 232, 237f., 727, 815ff., 837.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 615.

⁴ Ibid.

Growing with the development of civilization, there belongs to this conquest also a self-conscious mode of approach; a need which is as elementary as the one which led to an independent development of the sciences.¹ Lukács defines this need as the human desire that man should also relate himself to this outside world which he already controls practically and in fact, viz. that with his conquest he should also gain a home [Heimat].²

Without doubt, the Lukácsian differentiation between the origin of the specifically essential signs and the necessity of an adequate language of art poses many questions. In the first place, we would like to have some illustration if not a full-scale presentation. Unfortunately, Lukács gives hardly any full-scale examples, though he himself, apparently, must have also felt this lack. Probably this is why he promises his readers a full-scale presentation; he even announces an additional volume with the provisional title: *Art as a Socio-Historical Phenomenon*.³

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 615, 744.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 615.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 15. In the meantime, Lukács has apparently abandoned this project and seems to now vacillate between continuing his Marxian Ontology and writing an autobiography (An Interview with Georg Lukács, *Die Zeit*, Feuilleton, April 14, 1970).

Moreover, it should be mentioned that Lukács does introduce into his text some examples which refer to various works of art; few of them, however, amount to much more than mere hints.¹ Of course, there is his rather extensive account of Brueghel's paintings. Yet even this account can hardly serve as a full illustration of his aesthetic *Spielraum*, i.e., of the specific interconnectedness which is contained within Brueghel's art. Thus we shall attempt to complete the Lukácsian illustration of Brueghel's pictures. What then constitutes Brueghel's specific *Spielraum* between particularity and universality? What is it that makes up this painter's own true specificity? And how does Brueghel mediate (cancel, preserve and elevate) the essential signs of his objective environment?

Since Lukács refers more than once to Brueghel's painting, we are not restricted to Lukács's exceptionally long illustration (which we have dealt with in the preceding chapter), but can also employ some of his hints.² Take for instance, his allusion to Brueghel in which he differentiates between the two tendencies of the Renaissance crises,

¹ All of this is the reason why we attempted to make up our own illustrations.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 506, 569, 673f., 676, 693; vol. 12, pp. 163, 375, 711, 714f., 829.

viz. that of a benumbed religiousness [*erstarrte Religiosität*] on the one hand, and that of a powerful realism on the other hand.¹ In addition, we are able to find one hint in which Lukács specifies that Brueghel's pictures express a clear position [*Stellungsnahme*] towards both tendencies of his time.² Again in another place, Lukács suggests that Brueghel's specific mediation *reduces* the Christian myth to a mere episode (viz. it displays the Renaissance tendency towards a "benumbed religiousness").³ Lukács argues: if we look at some of Brueghel's pictures, say *The Procession to Calvary* (1564, *Kunsthistorisches Museum*, Vienna), then we will notice that the figure of Christ "almost disappears among the endless flood of victims (namely those of Alba's regime in Flanders)."⁴ Apparently this *diminution of Christ* shows one Renaissance tendency within Brueghel's art, but how does Lukács substantiate the other great tendency of the Renaissance: the *rise of a powerful realism*? To answer this question, we must

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 375, 711, 714f. Speaking of a *Renaissance crisis*, Lukács clearly indicates his interpretation of the *Renaissance* as a historic crises. This interpretation conforms with Historical Marxism. (E.g., cf. Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*; op. cit. p. 82).

² Op. Cit., vol. 11, p. 506.

³ Op. cit. vol. 12, pp. 714f.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 506.

return to our analysis of Lukács's characterization of the artistic consciousness, and especially to his seemingly contradictory concepts of the artistic discrepancy between intention and work and the artist's simultaneous aesthetic exactitude. We also might recall the Lukácsian interpretation of Brueghel's work as a contradictory unity of:

- (i) a subjective, intended and explicit (determined) component which exhibits the joyful motley and casual accidental of Brueghel's most immediate objects, and
- (ii) an objective, unintended and implicit (undetermined) component which contains a "turning-into-the-surface" of the depicted objects' essential forces and relations.¹

Although Lukács never does connect his scattered examples and theoretical remarks, it is not very difficult to comprehend that both of his notions, viz. the intended-explicit component as well as the unintended-implicit component of the Brueghelean art corresponds with his notion of two historically significant tendencies in Brueghel's time. That is to say, the explicit component, say Christ's "disappearance" among the victims of Alba's regime, displays mainly the tendency towards a frozen religiousness--though it seems to display also the tendency towards realism: Christ's truly becoming a man among men.

¹ Cf. pp. 79f of this thesis.

Just the same, Lukács seems to think that primarily it is the implicit component (say Brueghel's way of painting all his realities as a uniquely united substance) which contains the Renaissance tendency towards a powerful realism. In other words, Brueghel's specific brush-work expresses "the greatest rise of science, . . . the philosophic conquest of the secular reality."¹ Of course, we must not forget that this component, though clearly present, represents after all the indefinite component within the Brueghelean articulation.

Provided our suppletion of Lukács's many examples holds, then we are able to interpret Brueghel's work as preserving: a cancellation of the medieval religiousness and a simultaneous elevation of the modern enlightenment.² Although we might say, Brueghel's brush preserves two specific Renaissance tendencies as two significant human attitudes, uniting them thus into one unexchangeable work of an explicit-implicit texture: its specific fabric reflects a specific historically significant crisis and

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 711.

² Consider the defetishizing effect of Brueghel's presentation of Christ *as well as* its elevating effect.

becomes thus a "paradigm of a man-related and yet objectively founded unity of the world," and as such also a paradigm of the ineffable.¹

The assertion of a categorical structure of the artist's consciousness and the consequential "*unequivocal state* of his form-language" raises an important question.² We are astounded that it is difficult for Lukács to illustrate his assertions, or to quote many witnesses for them. We would expect a part of the audience, or at least many of the critics, to realize at once the *unequivocal state* of the form-language of the great masters. Surely, this is not the case. How many would agree with the Lukácsian interpretation of Homer, Zola, or Brueghel? Of course, all this does not mean that we cannot find theories which assert a somewhat similar language of symbolic forms; Susanne Langer's recent works can be mentioned as an example.³ Lukács himself, however, insists that Goethe represents "the only great exception in the history of

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 676.

² Op. cit., fol. 12, p. 160; italics mine.

³ Susanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1942; *Feeling and Form*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1953; *Problems of Art*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1957.

aesthetics" who really understood and knew about the significance of the category of specificity.¹ Be this as it may, Goethe's understanding of specificity can hardly satisfy our previous question; why do not more people *realize and agree about* the specific state of the form-language of the great masters?

Returning to our starting point, we are now in a better position to see that Lukács's category of specificity rests upon two consecutive assertions:

- (i) The Hegelian premise of the dialectical nature in the form of its Marxist reduction to dialectical materialism, and the consequently dialectical process of cognition as the only adequate form for reflecting the dialectical reality.
- (ii) The Lukácsian premise of another dialectical, though less conscious process of cognition (mediation, intuition) as the basis for the second adequate form of reflecting dialectical reality.

Somehow we repeat what has been pointed out before, if we say that Lukács's first basic assertion represents a philosophical issue that is not at all accepted by every

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 266.

philosopher; it is also obvious that this fundamental question cannot be answered within the context of this investigation.¹ However, we may ask about Lukács's second basic assertion: What is an unconscious and yet specific process of cognition? How do we think unconsciously? And if so, how do we really know that such a process is ultimately dialectical in its structure and origin? What Lukács actually does, is emphasize one Marxist theory (i.e., that any adequate reflection of objective reality must necessarily also reflect the dialectical structure of objective reality). That is to say, any true reflection of the objective reality must contain--*hic et ubique*--the distinctive signs of dialectic: universality and particularity. In short, it must be "logical" in the Marxist sense. Lukács must have been aware of the fact that a change of emphasis upon the different assertions of his (basically Marxist) thought, causes serious difficulties.² Thus it appears that Lukács finds himself compelled to take a very interesting position. Apparently he does not want to say that art gives only an inadequate picture of the world; yet he can hardly claim that art

¹ Cf. pp. 36f of this thesis.

² Though in a different context, we have already dealt with these difficulties before; cf. pp. 42f of this thesis.

reflects objectivity *per se*, nor could he possibly propose that an adequately reflecting language of art is irrational. Lukács's solution to all this is striking, if not ingenious; he simply maintains that aesthetic intuition is not an irrational process, but rather a realization of a hidden cognitive process. He supports his assertion with his theory of the genius, which entails not only an interruption of the artist's overt rationality, but also the partial suspension of the critique of contemporary works of art. We recall that only later historical periods will be in a position to judge the same works with apodictic certainty.¹

Lukács rests his aesthetic theory upon the assertion of *two* basic modes of human reflection, which differ only in the form of the reality which they reflect, for both modes reflect one and the same reality. That is to say, Lukács's extension of the adequate forms of objective reality--if true--reduces the significance of scientific language as mirror of the world, to one polar aspect of human rationality--remember, how Lukács juxtaposes *thinking consciousness* with *living and thinking*.² Furthermore, we should not fail to notice Lukács's vague, or

¹ Cf. pp. 39f of this thesis.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 224.

should we say cautious terms for denoting the two polar aspects of human thought and behaviour. It suffices to indicate that both terms remind one of another contemporary philosopher who stresses a similar dualism. We are thinking of Ortega y Gasset's basic differentiation between *pure reason* and a *living reason*.¹ Besides, Ortega y Gasset also attempts to analyze and judge works of art with an unequivocal certainty which reminds us somewhat of Lukács.²

Lukács justifies the existence of two basis modes of human reflection with the human desire "that man should also relate himself to this outside world which we already controls practically and in fact; viz. that with his conquest he should also gain a home."³ For all that, it still seems difficult for us to understand fully why man should need to gain a home that he has already conquered through his labour and with the help of his scientific approach. Why should man want to articulate the ineffably certain immediacy of his respective world as his *Spielraum*, if he is able to comprehend its very specificity scientifically as his conquest: his labour and fight?

¹ Ortega y Gasset, *Über das Denken*; Gesammelte Werke, vol. iv, pp. 261ff.; Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1950.

² Ortega y Gasset, *Über den Blickpunkt in der Kunst*; *ibid.*, vol. iii, pp. 307ff.

³ *Op. cit.*, vol. 11, pp. 615; cf. also p. 744.

It seems worthwhile to indicate that Lukács's interpretation of the artistic act as fulfilment of the human desire for a home and native land [Heimat]¹ is somewhat reminiscent of Heidegger's interpretation of the artistic act as the establishing of a world and the producing of the earth [*das Aufstellen einer Welt und das Herstellen der Erde*]². Of course, this apparent similarity touches the much discussed problem of the compatibility of Marxism and existentialism. A comparative study of, say, Lukács and Heidegger's philosophy would perhaps yield some new insight into contemporary thought.

Hitherto one tended to consider the Marxist dogma as the doctrine of the socio-economic determination of man. Is it possible for a Marxist to claim that man has a fundamental desire for a home and native land which art alone can fully satisfy? To be sure, Marxists have always assigned a social function to art, but might hesitate to speak of man's fundamental desire for art.³ Lukács, however, seems convinced that there exists such a need and therefore

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 615. Almost needless to say, Lukács uses the terms *home* and *native land* in a metaphorical way only.

² Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege*, Vittorio Klostermann Frankfurt am Main, 1963; p. 36.

³ Of course, there are exceptions, for instance, consider Ernst Fischer's *The Necessity of Art*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth 1963.

criticizes the "Marxist theory and parxis" of defining the artist as an *engineer* of the soul.¹ He draws our attention to certain social facts which are not only typical of the Capitalist society, but also of the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries. These facts include "almost all the symptoms of a life experienced as meaningless," and they range "from the hollow sport fanaticism of the crowd to juvenile delinquency." In fact "the official Communist propaganda, directed against these concrete, socially determined degenerations, is generally as powerless as those directed against the religious need."² Lukács's authoritative criticism not only partly supports our previous remark on Marxist ideology, but also underlines the importance of his own theory about a specific human need for an aesthetically adequate articulation of reality. Yet, Lukács is not very clear about the forces behind what he calls socially determined degenerations. He seems to have more in mind than only the lack of adequately developed arts. Be this as it may, Lukács does at least clearly indicate that now, after changing from the economic and social bases of capitalism the Socialist countries still need the artists to follow up with an

¹ Cf. p. 8 of this thesis.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 867.

adequate change of the superstructure. Apparently Lukács is convinced that any true flourishing of such a new art is yet to come. The difficulties which might arise from Lukács's assertion we have indicated before.¹

¹Cf. pp. 42f of this thesis.

(f) THE PROBLEMATIC FOUNDATION OF THE LUKÁCSEAN THEORY OF ART

Recapitulating the Lukács¹ean description of the human need for art, we summari

- (i) man's deep need for art is ultimately only a function of his behaviour, i.e. his attempt to conquer his total environment - human and natural;
- (ii) man's consciousness of his own uniqueness is merely a function of this very need (i);
- (iii) man's search for a "home" fulfils the same needs (i, ii).

To complete this analysis we must add that Lukács¹ supplements his theory with another argument which significantly contributes to the complexity of his doctrine. Lukács¹ also offers a psychological reason, a sort of existentialist argument for explaining man's deep need for art. Briefly stated, he proposes that man's aesthetic need arises from another and apparently even more fundamental socio-human need, i.e., man's desire for understanding and realizing his life completely. Calling it man's desire for completion and integrity, and again one of the most important social needs, Lukács¹ maintains that

its force has been felt throughout history.¹ In his peculiar way, Lukács stresses that "completion is an essential determination [*Bestimmung*] of human life itself."² That is to say, our desire for completion is not only felt within everyday life, but growing out of everyday life, it takes such different forms as myth, religion, art, ethics and philosophy.³ However, we must guard against being misled to conclude that Lukács must have somehow rearranged the Marxian order of fundamental determination. Lukács is always quick to qualify the force of man's need for completion and he insists that this concept does not at all conflict with the Marxist doctrine which views the metabolism of society with nature "as the object and simultaneously as the base from which arise the subjective needs for and the ways of their satisfaction."⁴ As we have already pointed out at the end of Chapter (b), Lukács

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 534ff., vol. 12, p. 238.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 234.

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 235ff.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 549.

assertion of an essential human need for art does not necessarily collide with Marx's differentiation between the superstructure and its socio-economic base. That is to say, Lukács never claims that art plays a *necessary* function in changing the socio-economic structure from one class situation to the next class situation.¹

Though describing the end and the fulfilment of man's need for art in more than one way, Lukács has apparently always the same cause in mind, i.e., man's desire for completion. The question arises whether we can coherently comprehend this conception together with his other formulations of it, say, man's desire for integration, man's need for a meaning of his unique life, and man's need for an adequate home. What does Lukács actually mean when he speaks of our desire for completion? Apparently, Lukács has neither a *unio mystica* in mind, nor anything like Hegel's *Absolute Spirit*. Lukács himself explains that he refers with this concept to a "socio-human need" of the members of a given socio-historical group, which manifest their desire of achieving and fully understanding their way of life.² He uses as his first example a tribe of primitives who "wished to view in its dance a *concentrated completion* of the most important events of its own life

¹ Cf. p. 43 of this thesis.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 237ff.

(of war, of hunting, etc.)."¹ In other words, all people, even primitive tribesmen, desire perfection; Lukács quotes Goethe's maxim that "even the most unimportant of men can be complete."

Based on his metabolic role, yet living a personal life within a certain social situation, man becomes aware of a gap between the meaningfulness of *his* life (as an end in itself) and the meaning of life itself.² What Lukács wishes to say is rather difficult though not at all obscure. For instance, millions of early Christians were convinced that the meaning of life transcends life; they would merely try to preserve their souls for the beyond. Life itself--they called it secular life--did not possess for them any intrinsic value. Surely, it is not a universal human conviction to seek the meaning of life *in life itself*. Moreover, Lukács wants to say that the gap between a meaningful life and the meaning of life itself does not *necessarily* disappear with the acceptance of the enlightened conviction that the meaning of life is life itself. Still, there remains the gap between the consciousness of the individual and that of the species.³

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 234; italics mine.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 176f.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 177.

That is to say, what may be meaningful within a social group is not always meaningful to each of its individual members. This is why some people cannot see why they should wait, at three o'clock in the morning, on some deserted street corner until the light changes to green; or this is why some Polish soldiers could not see why they should invade Czechoslovakia (1968); it was not meaningful to them in spite of having been told by their press that it was meaningful indeed.¹ Of course, one can always argue that there belongs one and only one true meaning to each significant situation; either the awareness of the individual or that of his socio-historical group represents an accurate picture of reality. Be this as it may, it simply does not change the fact that the individual sees things the way they appear to him and thus his consequent experience of the gap between what is meaningful to him and what is "meaningful" to the people around him.

Anybody familiar with anthropological theory may wonder how Lukács's doctrine of an essential human desire for completion corresponds to, say, the somewhat similar theories of Goethe, Nietzsche and Freud. Of course, in this context we can only indicate the question without

¹ To be sure, a similar thing can be said about some Americans in Vietnam.

pursuing it at any length, for first the theory at hand demands more clarification. Here, after all, only a resolute cut through the diverse layers of Lukács's abstract language will help us any further and yield the linkage of his premises. At last we seem to be in a position to say something conclusive about Lukács's complex theory.

Jumping *in medias res* we propose that three interlinked premises underlie the whole structure of Lukács's aesthetics. They ultimately define man's specific relations to his own products:

- (i) Based on his metabolic role, viz., on his particular employment of de-anthropomorphizing tools and media, yet living within a personal life, man becomes aware of a gap between the meaningfulness of his life (as an end in itself) and the meaning of life itself.¹

That is to say, Lukács interprets man's desire of completion as man's awareness of a lacuna between his human conditions and completion. He gives us many hints; he argues that man experiences in many ways such a lacuna as tension and

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 182f., vol. 12, pp. 234ff., 237. Here I follow the translation in Agnes Heller's essay (op. cit., p. 91) and render Lukács *desanthropomorphisieren* also with *de-anthropomorphize*.

deficiency, viz., as the gap [*Sprung*, *Lücke*] between:

- (a) immediacy and meaningfulness [*Sinnbeladenheit*],¹
- (b) the flow of appearances and the permanence of nature,²
- (c) the appearances and the essence,³
- (d) microcosm and macrocosm,⁴
- (e) immanence and transcendence,⁵
- (f) the consciousness of the individual and that of the species,⁶ and
- (g) the sense of the individual's life and that of life itself.⁷

All this leads us to Lukács's second basic assertion:

- (ii) Out of man's growing awareness of these various gaps grows a new sense of completion which enables man to realize his (specific) needs for completion within his (specific) way of differentiating between himself and completion.⁸

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 826.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 249.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 826.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 177.

⁵ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 839.

⁶ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 776.

⁷ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 177.

⁸ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 234ff. 237.

In other words, *man's usage of de-anthropomorphizing media (tools, etc.) initiates his specifically anthropocentric needs.* His conquest of nature brings about a new relationship which only thereafter produces man's new sense of completion, i.e., a new but "essential determination [*Bestimmung*] of human life itself."¹ The growth of a new sense of completion represents a very complex and long historical process which is still going on. Even today, man does not often comprehend this essential determination of his life: his need of completion. Yet he is able to experience and satisfy this very need, though always within (a certain) ideology or conceptual presentation [*Vorstellungsgebilde*] and according to his particular intentions.

Be it now more or less consciously, man does in fact always seek completion, positing thus either its absolute or its relative transcendence (so called by the author).² That is to say, Lukács differentiates in a rather unusual way between an absolute and a relative transcendency. Apparently he means by "absolute transcendency" our human assumption of a realm that transcends forever all

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 234.

² Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 121f., 125, 129, 131; vol. 12, pp. 833, 845ff.

our human knowledge; and he means by "relative transcendency" our assumption of something which transcends only temporarily our human knowledge. On the one hand, say in his religious behaviour, and somewhat differently in his plain everyday life, man assumes an absolute transcendency, i.e., an insurmountable gap between himself and completion.¹ To illustrate Lukács's "absolute transcendency," say in everyday life, we could say that an intelligent man who is told that he has an incurable disease may well assume an absolute transcendency of the causes of the disease (etc., etc.), in order to adjust himself to his situation as realistically as possible. On the other hand, there are science, art and moral behaviour which though generally dissimilar, ultimately assert only a secular barrier that will be conquered some day, i.e., a "relative transcendency" of completion.² We recall the ethical act in which the individual, though ultimately socially determined, realizes the barrier *in persona*, viz. as the fulfilment of the gap between his intention and its factual result within the completion of his life.³ In contrast to this personal lacuna and completion in the ethical situation, art and science developed into organs of mankind. That is to say,

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 833f.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 846.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 783f.; vol. 12, pp. 234ff., 237ff., 835ff., 846-856.

the scientist and the artist adopted for man's conquest of reality two specific fields of objectification: their specific systems of signals.¹ The scientist, conceiving of transcendency as a provisional gap towards completion, does not posit anything else but that which he already knows.² That is to say, the scientist does not posit the gap between that which he knows and that which he does not yet know. At a first glance, Lukács's account of the scientific conquest of reality seems to be compatible with the traditional Marxist views. Nevertheless, Lukács's view differs significantly from any simple teleologically progressive interpretation of the sciences. This point is not very clear within the context of his *Eigenart des "Ästhetischen"*, but cannot be overlooked in his own account on the meaning of his *Eigenart des "Ästhetischen"*. Lukács maintains in his account that it is a "prejudice" to believe that the field of the unknown (i.e., that which is relatively transcendent) will be reduced through the increase of our knowledge.³ Lukács thinks the opposite is the case, namely that the field of the unknown is increasing; "The better we know nature--with which science

¹ I follow the translation employed in Agnes Heller's essay (op. cit., pp. 85f.) and render *Objektivatation* also with objectification.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 846f.

³ Cf. the appendix of this thesis, p. 169.

and thus also labour are in interaction--the more obvious this unknown field will become, *it has thus the most important consequences for later human development.*"¹

With the exception of Heidegger and some other existential philosophers, Lukács seems to be in opposition to many modern thinkers (including Marxists), who obviously tend to think that man may eventually learn everything, or at least most things which can be known about himself and the universe. Under such circumstances, does it still make sense to reject--as Lukács obviously does--in ideology the absolute transcendency of the universe as a whole? Lukács would probably answer that what is relatively transcendent for today, will be known tomorrow and so forth. Yet, man will thus find himself forever surrounded by an increasing field of relative transcendency: *an absolute field of relative transcendency.* No doubt, Lukács's own conviction, and his apparently discriminating terminology appear to be contradictory.

With his assertion of a continuous gap between human knowledge and ignorance, Lukács seems to indicate that mankind will always have need for the humane language of art. In contrast to the scientist (who does not posit

¹ Ibid.; italics mine.

anything unknown to him) the artist incorporates in his positing the very gap between man's knowledge and the realm of "relative" transcendency. In short, the positing of this gap represents an essential aspect of the artist's language, only thus can he hope to form a *complete* picture of his world. Indeed, it is precisely the nature of this gap, which provides the base for "the aesthetic relevance" of any true work of art.¹ This leads us to Lukács's third basic assertion:

- (iii) Man's various ways of conceptualizing and differentiating between himself and completion, stimulates in the artist a complex awareness which forces the artist to point and fulfil adequately this very gap, the artist fulfils thus (in a paradigm) man's need for completion.²

Though man has been developing diverse ways and modes to conquer the gap between himself and life, science and art alone developed into truly objective (though limited) systems. Art and science are therefore of great significance for us since they form respectively the subjective and objective components within the ideological development of a

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 250f.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 238f.

secular *Weltanschauung*.¹ Each of these two languages fulfils a specific task. Science proves to be indispensable for setting down the secular foundations for such a *Weltanschauung*. However, Lukács insists that only after these foundations have been worked with by the artist in a subjective way, *only then* will the secular ideology of science turn into the ideology of a "joyfully accepted secularity."² Indeed, "the human profession of art [*der menschliche Beruf der Kunst*]" constitutes in this way an indispensable social function.³ Only the genius who follows his calling, is in a position to fulfil through his labour the appropriate "*teleology* of the *creative* process."⁴ He may not really comprehend what he is doing, yet his (intuitive) awareness and (accurate) positing of the gap towards completion embodies the two intimately connected patterns of aesthetic behaviour. That is to say, we find on the one hand his teleological-behaviouristic

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 848, 856. The apparent contradiction between our calling Lukács's conceptualization of art a "truly *objective* (though limited) system" as well as the "*subjective* component within the ideological development of a secular *Weltanschauung*" can be resolved, if we realize that any subjective component of a social situation may become (as such) the objective of human understanding.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 848.

³ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 832.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 151; italics mine.

efforts to fulfil his desire for completion, and we find, simultaneously, on the other hand, his ontological-cognitive positing of a gap towards completion. All this brings Lukács's two modes of aesthetic reflection back to our mind and we realize that the teleological-behaviouristic aspect of a work *fulfils* and connects man's "soul" with the "destiny of his kind" (*nostra causa agitur*), and the ontological-cognitive aspect of a work *displays and reconciles* a specific gap as an ineffable paradigm of human life (beauty is truth, truth beauty).¹

Recapitulating all three of the above quoted assertions together, we can hardly fail to notice their hidden sequence:

- (i) Based on his metabolic role, yet living within a personal life, man becomes aware of a gap between the meaningfulness of his life and the meaning of life itself.
- (ii) Out of man's growing awareness of this gap grows his sense of completion which enables man to realize his specific needs for completion within his specific way of differentiating between himself and completion.

¹ Cf. chapters (b) and (c) of this thesis.

- (iii) Man's development of a new sense of completion stimulates in some men (viz. artists) a complex artistic awareness which forces them to posit and fulfil adequately this very gap--and satisfies his (and other men's) need for completion.

Lukács's haphazard presentation of this sequence of assertions will render any critical assessment difficult. Some difficulties seem to arise from the particular relativity between the two Lukácsian concepts of an apparent gap and the subsequent fulfilment of it. To wit, if we view the artist's reflection as his *fulfilment* of a gap within his specific human situation--Lukács even speaks of the "well-rounded fullness" of the work--then we may come to think of the artist's work as little more than his mere *filling out* of a specific gap within the endless historical progression of gaps (between the respective historical situations and completion).¹

Simultaneously however, the artist posits and preserves also a new gap, namely the difference between his new situation and completion.² As we know, Lukács maintains that the artistic positing fulfils its task in an interlinked

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 239.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 234ff.

way.¹ Any such work reduces to relativity the gap which it posited--for instance, take Homer, whose *Iliad* defetishizes the Greek Olympians.² However, the same work preserves simultaneously a new ideology which is posited as the two prevalent but antagonistic social forces during Homer's lifetime.³ We recall Lukács's difficult statement that the necessity for the artist's positing a gap towards completion and "the necessity . . . of the interconnectedness of particularity, specificity and universality assert themselves elementally" in each work of art.⁴ Abiding by an "internal necessity," the artist posits and transforms a segment of his world into an "intensive totality": a truly human world of "well-rounded fullness." This totality represents the *Spielraum* of specificity of each world, reflected by art.⁵

Lukács encounters difficulties when he wants to show how it is possible for the artist to posit his work as an aesthetic interconnectedness. *How* in fact does the

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 743, 328; vol. 12, p. 846.

² Cf. pp. 66f. of this thesis.

³ Cf. pp. 69f. of this thesis.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 225.

⁵ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 239.

artist know? *What* enables him to fulfil his "capillary and preparatory work of the future [*die kapillarisches Vorarbeit des Zukünftigen*]?"¹ Lukács's assertion of a convergency theorem, which we encountered before, hardly suffices to demonstrate the case in point.² We are able to discover only few passages which allude to it.³ In one of them (probably the most significant), Lukács asserts the *aesthetic convergency* between the "category-pair: *content* and *form*" and the "category-pair: *within* and *without* of artistic substantiality."⁴ Obviously, Lukács has here his two important aesthetic categories in mind; it appears that *specificity*, his essential category of the aesthetic appearances, makes up the counterpart to *inherency*: his category of aesthetic intuition. That is to say, *inherency*, the form of aesthetic cognition makes it possible for the artist to mirror his world, and *specificity*, an essential form of the appearances, necessitates its artistic articulation. In other words, *inherency*--due to the *correspondence* of a *within* and a *without*--warrants the artist's grasping the *interconnectedness* of his world, whereas

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 238.

² Cf. p. 87 of this thesis.

³ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 754, 756f., 759, 789, 794, 800f., 812, 817; vol. 12, pp. 327ff.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 794; italics mine.

specificity--due to the *interconnectedness* of the coherent appearances--warrants its own *inherency* in the artist. If we recall what has been said in chapter (c) about the convergency of the artistic personality ("substantiality") with its historical situation ("dialectic of the phenomena"),¹ then we realize that this convergency of a *within* and a *without* constitutes nothing else but another line of interconnectedness. Indeed we might say that Lukács's category of *inherency* warrants the connection between the artist and his environment and Lukács's category of *specificity* warrants the connection of all phenomena. In short, Lukács's two connective categories make it possible for the philosopher to connect the artistic "substantiality" to any point of the environment he wants it to connect. As we have hinted at the beginning of this chapter, the question arises as to whether it is really possible for Lukács to maintain man's fundamental socio-economic determination simultaneously with the *inherency* of the historical structure of the socio-economic phenomena in the great artist.

Lukács's position is a difficult one. In order to demonstrate the validity of his tightly interconnected structure of aesthetic reflection, Lukács would have to prove

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 757; cf. also p. 86 of this thesis.

two different things. *In the first place*, he would have to show beyond any reasonable doubt that Marx's tenets of historical materialism are true. That is to say, he would have to demonstrate that his *assumed content* of artistic reflection (its teleological, as well as its ontological aspect), does really exist--namely as the socio-economic base of history Lukács wants us to believe in. *In the second place*, after having converted all of us to Marxism, Lukács would have to show us beyond any reasonable doubt that Marx's structure of historical materialism is indeed reflected within each significant work of art. (Surely, Marx himself never assumed this to be the case.)

Only if Lukács would have succeeded in demonstrating these two fundamental assertions, only then could we accept his "unavoidable conclusion" that the dialectic of the "objective work" *inheres* in artistic "substantiality;" it would be unavoidable indeed.¹ However, Lukács has never really demonstrated that his two fundamental assertions are true. At any rate, we would have expected him to prove his fundamental assertion of an aesthetic category of *inherency*. Of course, we have his many critical studies and there are his many hints in his *Eigenart des Ästhetischen*. As we have done in this dissertation, both sources can be used in

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 790.

making a case for the Lukácsian theory, however these examples hardly suffice to demonstrate Lukács's theory satisfactorily. What is needed would be more concrete examples of his theory. We have already indicated that Lukács announced in his *Eigenart des "Ästhetischen"* two books on this topic; there he intends to concretize the process of "historic-systematic determinations."¹

Apparently, Lukács has changed his mind in the meantime and there seems to be very little hope that he will have time enough left to take up his formidable *onus probandi*.²

In connection with Lukács's two fundamental assertions, we ask once more about the compatibility of both assertions. Does it really make sense to assert simultaneously

- (i) man's fundamental *socio-economic determination*,
and
- (ii) the *inherency* of the socio-economic phenomena
in all great artists in history?

Lukács thinks that they are compatible; he refers to the young Marx who maintains that "the formation of the artistic senses [*Kunstsinne*] is the labour of the whole previous

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 14f.

² An interview with Georg Lukács, *Die Zeit*, Feuilleton, April 14, 1970.

history of the world."¹ Of course, here we cannot possibly attempt to clarify what Marx really meant with his term *Kunstsinne* [artistic senses]. Lukács, of course, thinks Marx must have meant that man's artistic senses grew out of his anthropological needs for completion. That is to say, Lukács connects closely man's new sense for completion with man's artistic senses, i.e. our human sense of completion is connected with our desire for an *aesthetic fulfilment*. The great artist in turn is forced to fulfil our new sense of completion with the help of his *Kunstsinne* [artistic senses]; he posits on the one hand an *ontological definition* of a specific human situation and produces on the other hand a *teleological image of labour* as his link with the Marxist goal of society. However, is it still possible today for a Socialist society to accept the Marxist doctrine of man's socio-historical progression and still maintain man's need for an (artistically wrapped) ontological definition of his specific situation within his (already accepted) socio-historical progression? We have argued before that all this is possible, though some Marxists

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 107. "Die Bildung der Kunstsinne ist eine Arbeit der ganzen bisherigen Weltgeschichte." Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*; MEGA, (Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe) Frankfurt a.M., 1927-vol. iii, p. 120.

seem to think that it is not.¹

Be all this as it may, Lukács holds that the structure of each work of art represents an intensively differentiated, though well-rounded system of interconnectedness.² From our previous examples the reader will probably recall the analysis of Brueghel's paintings, especially the Lukácsian differentiation between their explicit and implicit components.³ That is to say, the specific interconnectedness of the painter's homogeneous medium consists in the differentiated positing of a very concrete *without* as the explicit component (*viz.*, the particularly depicted concrete objects), and a specific *within* as the implicit component (*viz.*, the forces, relations, etc., held by the artist in his capillary capacity as preparatory worker of the future).⁴ Of course, this specifically structured specificity is only valid for the representative arts. The structure of the explicit and implicit components differs according to the homogeneous medium; there is a great difference, say, between the marble of the sculpture, the language of literature and the sound of music. The particular characteristic of each

¹ Cf. the appendix of this thesis, p. 161.

² *Op. cit.*, vol. 12, p. 250.

³ Cf. pp. 79ff. of this thesis.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, vol. 12, p. 251.

medium necessitates in its form of art a different way of positing.

As we have seen before, Lukács wishes to connect art with reality and asserts therefore his two fundamental categories (*inherency* and *specificity*) which, in turn, are ultimately based upon the conception of interconnectedness. That is to say, he rests his conception of a specifically aesthetic fulfilment upon the Marxist doctrine of a dialectically interconnected reflection in the human mind. Apparently, the artist fulfils his function via reflecting the interconnectedness of things within his specific situation in the world. Positing such a specificity, the artist transforms *its interconnectedness via his specific interconnectedness with it* (his substantiality) *into an adequate interconnectedness of a well-rounded and intensive totality*.

Lukács's employment of the Marxist concept of interconnectedness permits him to connect his aesthetic sphere with the world of appearances. But, what is the unique significance of this interconnectedness? Surely, we can posit such concepts as generality and singularity and, moreover we can posit a connective, say interconnectedness

which represents a specific instance that connects between the particular and the universal. However, how much reality do these concepts reflect? Idealists have no need to be worried about the diverse groups of materialists. For the materialists's mistake does not consist in manipulating ideas as if ideas were objects; on the contrary, it appears that their mistake consists in looking at and manipulating the objects as if objects were ideas. Lukács's most fundamental conception of interconnectedness is a case in point. Though it connects certain human ideas within a logical structure, it need not necessarily mean anything beyond that structure. Surely, the great majority of artists has never been aware of such a form of interconnectedness--otherwise they would have told us long ago.

Since Lukács obviously wants to maintain an aesthetic rationality, he seems to have little choice but to assert that aesthetic intuition represents a sort of unconscious suprarationality. A great part of his theory rests upon his many, but unsystematic attempts to show how it is possible for every language of art to reflect the specific interconnectedness of the artist's world. It appears to us that Lukács has some success in describing parts of the complexity of art in his critical studies of literature. To be sure, Lukács may have accomplished a sound critical

description of specific works *in spite* of his empty premise of interconnectedness; it might be simply because his profound and wide knowledge of the arts enabled him to say many interesting things about them.

In conclusion, we must now realize that Lukács's language of art both fulfils a necessary mediation, and in so doing occupies a field of mediation. Once more we recall Lukács's insistence that the artist abides by an internal necessity, when positing and transforming a segment of his world into a well-rounded and intensive totality, i.e., the specificity of his world.¹ It is through such an originally aesthetic positing that the work itself turns into a link within the interconnectedness of all specific works of art. In fact, the very specificity of each work of art as an objective, though particular presence within the continuity of all works of art, makes it into the perfect vehicle for expressing the self-consciousness of man.² Properly speaking, it is the specifically aesthetic positing--of a segment of the artist's external or internal world--as an organizing centre which turns the work into a "vehicle of universality."³ Hence it is due to the ubiquity of the countless number of true

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 239.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 239.

³ Op. cit. vol. 12, p. 328.

works of art, i.e., the countless number of "well-rounded and intensive totalities", that the language of each work becomes an expression for the relation of the individual to mankind.¹

Lukács's characterization of the language of art culminates in his theory of art's unifying coherence which connects the self-consciousness of man. It seems not too difficult for us to see *that the structure of the interconnectedness of all works of art--Lukács speaks of it as "the universality of ubiquity"*²*--corresponds to the structure of each work of art, and consequently to the structure of Lukács's aesthetically essential form of the appearances: the interconnectedness of reality. That is to say, Lukács's somewhat concealed, but most fundamental concept of interconnectedness enables him to connect coherently his two modes of aesthetic immanence, i.e., the artist's ontological-cognitive positing of his specific world and the artist's teleological-behaviouristic labours towards his reconciliation with the whole world. As we have*

¹ Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 239.

² Op. cit., vol. 12, p. 328.

seen before, the concept of interconnectedness permits Lukács to maintain simultaneously his two contrary assertions of man's fundamental socio-economic development and its apparent inherency in all great artist in history.¹

Thus the artist who creates a work appears as a moment within the interconnected stream of similar moments that runs towards one and only one completion. In man, the teleology of this dialectical process of evolution becomes aware of itself and articulates through the artist its own (temporary) wanting and end: completion. We find it difficult to accept the Lukácsian assertion of an all-inclusive interconnectedness of reality which permits the artist, firstly to reflect in his work's intensive totality the (assumed) historic completion of a classless society and, secondly to reconcile the meaning of our specific lives with the meaning of life itself. Perhaps it is merely his human, much too human desire for completion which makes Lukács to assume the interconnectedness

¹ Op. cit., vol. 11, p. 681f. As we have indicated before, even Lukács realizes this contradiction. (Cf. pp. 40f. of this thesis).

of all things towards completion, i.e., the Absolute.

Th. W. Adorno sums up Lukács's aesthetics--five years before the publication of Lukács's *Die Eigenart des "Ästhetischen"* suggesting that "the *spell* that binds Lukács and prevents his desired return to the Utopia of his youth, *repeats the enforced reconciliation* [*erpresste Versöhnung*] which he recognizes within absolute idealism."¹ Adorno's conclusion still seems to hold for the Lukácsian *magnum opus*. Surely it is less the apparent secularity of Lukács's foundations which we find hard to accept, than its dialectically interconnected teleology, i.e., its *promise* of an Utopia in the far distance.

¹ Theodor W. Adorno, *Erpresste Versöhnung*, *Der Monat*, No. 122, November 1958, pp. 37-49. My translation and italics.

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(h) APPENDIX

During my work on this thesis I happened to come across a paperback which contained a collection of four dialogues of Lukács with three scholars who were obviously interested in his *Die Eigenart des "Ästhetischen"*. These four dialogues took place on four consecutive days in Lukács's home. They were taped and subsequently edited by Theo Pinkus.¹ The editor assures us that he has changed the live dialogue as little as possible in order "to preserve the first impression of the spoken work."²

It appears to me that particularly the first of the four dialogues contributes to the understanding of the complexity of our topic.³ I have therefore chosen to translate the important parts of this dialogue.⁴ Furthermore, it might also be interesting for the reader to learn from this dialogue that Lukács has apparently changed his mind about the continuation of his *Die Eigenart des "Ästhetischen"*. Instead of writing the planned historic-

¹ *Gespräche mit Georg Lukács, Hans Heinz Holz, Leo Koffler, Wolfgang Abendroth*; edited by Theo Pinkus; Rohwolt Verlag, Hamburg, 1967.

² Ibid., p. 7.

³ Ibid., pp. 9 - 31.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 9 - 15, 22 - 30.

materialistic continuation--its provisory title was: *Art as a Socio-Historical Phenomenon*¹--Lukács seems to work now a Marxist ontology.

Finally, I think I should also indicate that I shall try to keep the translation as close as possible to the spoken German dialogue.

* * *

FIRST DIALOGUE
(Georg Lukács and Hans Heinz Holz)

BEING AND CONSCIOUSNESS

HOLZ: Mr. Lukács, some ontological premises are assumed in your *Aesthetics*, which are not always, and not at all places in your book treated explicitly. Now we know that you are preparing an *Ontology* based on Marxist ideas; and we do not intend here to anticipate this book--its reading is still before us--but we would like to approach somehow the following question: how far are-- and will-- certain theories of your *Aesthetics* be determined by Ontological assumptions? Perhaps we might be able to clarify this point in this dialogue? There is now a preliminary question and I would like to begin with it; it

¹ Cf. pp. 113f. of this thesis.

became particularly topical in a discussion I had in Marburg with the students of Mr. Abendroth who is here with us right now.¹

Actually, is there such a thing as a Marxist ontology? What meaning can the work ontology have within a Marxian philosophy? Especially from the group of Mr. Abendroth's students have I been told that ontology based upon Marxism would necessarily dissolve into sociology. Ontological categories should be regarded only as social, only as historical categories. And surely, they are always social and historical categories. But, if the talk about ontology should make sense at all, then it would be essential that something is realized within these ontological categories, i.e. something which cannot be defined socially or historically. I would be indeed interested to learn your position concerning this question?

LUKÁCS: I would say, whatever one is as scientist or else: one begins with questions of everyday life i.e. one in which the ontological questions pose themselves in a very impressive way. I would like now to say something very simple: somebody crosses the street-- epistemologically he might be the most dogged neopositivist

¹ It is probably interesting for the reader to know that Lukács must have somehow changed his mind about the continuation of his *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*. Cf. p. 114 of this thesis. (Translator's note).

who negates any reality whatsoever--all the same, should he cross, he will be fully aware that a real car has run over him (and not some mathematical formula...) should he have refused to stop. Intentionally, I take such a brutal and simple example in order to demonstrate that always various forms of existence converge within our life, and that this convergence of forms of existence is of prime importance. This is why we cannot say that this question (whether any category is a sociological or an ontological one) is really a serious question. Today, it has become a custom among us to think of each subject (which is accepted academically) as an independent sphere of existence. Even such an intelligent philosopher as Nicolai Hartmann, argued once that the psyche would have to be something independent, since psychology has been taught at the universities for 200 or 300 years as an independent science. Now, I think that all these things are, historically, changing, and [only] Being and the changes of Being are fundamental. In my opinion this is the starting point and this also is [the point] from which I started in my aesthetics--which perhaps should have another title than *Eigenart des "Ästhetischen"* [The Characteristic of the Aesthetic]; more precisely, one should say: *the position of the aesthetic principle within the frame of man's intellectual activities*. Now again, the intellectual activities of man are not--in a certain way--psychic entities (as the university philosophers

think they are), but various forms according to which men organize those actions and reactions with their environment (to which they are always exposed) in one way or another for the defense and construction of their own existence. Today it can probably be regarded as a well-founded explanation that the beautiful cave pictures (...which have been discovered in the southern part of France and in Spain) were actually magic preparations for hunting; in other words these animals were not painted for aesthetic reasons, but because this period had the idea that a good picture of the animal would make the hunting more successful. At that time painting was still primarily a utilitarian reaction to life, and this [process] continues steadily throughout the socialization of society; [thus] the immediate reproduction of life has always been conditional. Again, I would like to say something very simple: you go to a store and buy a tie or six handkerchiefs; if you now imagine the process which was necessary for you and the handkerchiefs to meet at the market, you will arrive at a very vivid [and] very complicated picture; and I think these processes must not be excluded from [our] understanding or reality. This is the first point I would like to make here. The second point is a methodological one which, in a certain sense, goes much further. To wit, the advanced scientists have the tendency to grasp each form, each phenomenon of life, with the highest forms of their

objectivity, and believe this would produce the best analysis. Think of Kant's epistemology which, on the one hand originates from the mathematics of his time and the Newtonian physics--in order to establish a foundation for epistemology--and on the other hand takes the highly developed moral imperative as a foundation for all things practical. Now, I believe it is impossible to descend from such a higher form to a lower one. Using Newton's form of analysis, Newton's physics, it is impossible for one to arrive at the ideas by which a primitive hunter determined from certain noises whether a stag or a deer was near at hand. But if I set out with the categorical imperative, then I will also not be able to understand the simple practical activities of men in everyday life. This is why I believe that the direction we should go--and thus we are already in the middle of the ontological problem--is [sic!] a genetic problem. That is to say, we must try to analyze the conditions in their original forms of appearance and find out under what conditions these appearances tend to be more complicated and more mediated. In a certain sense, scientists evidently don't like to listen to this. For, if I take the fact science, [I might ask] how did this fact science originate? With each teleological positing--as represented by labour--there exists a moment in which the working man--and be it stone age man--reflects whether his instrument is appropriate for his purpose, or not. If I go back to the time before the production of specific tools

and think of the time when the aborigin picked only stones to fulfil certain functions, then I can imagine how he chooses between two stones and says this one is suitable to cut off a branch and that one is not--whether he formulated it as I now did [or not] is completely immaterial. [In fact] science originates from this choice of the first stone. [The difference is] only that science developed gradually into an independent apparatus of mediation; the roads leading to the last practical decisions are [now] exceptionally long--as we can observe in all factories today. And I believe it is much safer to begin the road of the genesis with the picking up of stones (for the first form of labour) and to finish with science, than begin with higher mathematics and try to work the way back to the picking up of stones. That means: if I want to comprehend the phenomena in a genetic sense, then the ontological way is absolutely unavoidable; and it is decisive [for us] to choose among the many coincidences (which accompany the genesis of each phenomenon) the typical and for the process itself essential moments. This would be my proof, so to speak, why I consider the ontological approach as the essential--whereas the exact borders which can be drawn between the sciences...play a secondary role. Now I shall come back to my previous example; when the car on the road crossing moves towards me I may conceptualize the automobile as a technological

phenomenon, as a sociological phenomenon, as a phenomenon of a philosophy of culture, etc., but the real car as a unit will or will not run over me. The sociological or (Kultur-) philosophical object: "car" is merely derived from a view which is connected with the real characteristics of the automobile (and thus represents the ideal reproduction of these characteristics), but the existing car is, so to speak, more primary [sic!] than, say the sociological view, for the car would move, even if I would not produce any sociology about it; moreover, no sociology of the automobile is able to move a car. If I may say so, there exists thus a real priority of the real [*Realitäts-priorität des Realen*], and we shall attempt to go back to these--you may call them primitive--facts of life and then try to comprehend the complicated facts out of the primitive ones.

HOLZ: Yes, the starting point in everyday life is thus the basis--somehow a sort of natural understanding of the world. Already Dilthey or Husserl employed this term, but evidently in a different sense than you do now.

LUKACS: The teleology employed it too...

HOLZ: Yes, but then arises the question whether ontology--if it does start out genetically from everyday life--does not indeed have a specific methodological form [in order] to approach the realities of these everyday

experiences and to transform them into a comprehensive system (so to speak). Thus the question arises: what is, in a narrower sense, the object of ontology? In the classical ontology one would say, for instance, that it is the theory of the categories.

LUKÁCS; I would say that the object [of ontology] is that which really exists. And the task is to examine the beings [i.e. that which is] for its essence, and therefore, to find the various steps and connexions within the beings [i.e. that which is]. In addition, I should like to inject now a point which goes apparently a bit further; however, I believe we should talk about it right at the beginning. I am thinking of a problem which, as far as I know, Nicolai Hartmann was the first in our time to bring into discussion; namely the fact that he discovered already in inorganic nature, viz. that complex things are primary in existence. Complexes should be investigated as such first and then reduced to their elements and elementary processes; they should not be--as the scientists in general mean--investigated in such a way that one must first search for certain elements and then (putting these elements together), construe certain complexes. You will remember that Hartmann regarded the solar system on the one hand, and the atom on the other hand, to be such complexes. I believe this is a very fertile thought. Offhand, it is clear that it would be impossible to have a science of

biology, if we did not regard life as a primary complex (in it, the life of the whole organism represents the ultimate force of determination for the particular processes); and if we did regard that it is impossible to synthesize all muscle--and nerve--and other movements--even if we were to know with scientific certainty each of these single movements. I would like to stress, one could never develop from the summation of all these parts an organism, and that these subordinated processes can only be understood as the subordinated processes of the complex organism.

Now we come to our question, namely to society, where, of course, this very complexity is [also] given; it is given not only to the whole of society, but also, so to speak, to the atom of society. Man himself is a complex--a complex in the biological sense; however, it is impossible to analyze him as such a complex; if I want to understand social phenomena...society has to be regarded first as a complex which consists of other complexes viz. [men]. Here we have already the decisive question: how are these complexes constituted and how can we arrive at the real essence of their existence and function. As we mentioned, we do not discuss the always subsequent sociological (and other) definitions, but the genetic conception of the origin and formation of these complexes. If you now regard society from this point of view, then you will find labour to be the fact for which you will find no analogy in

organic existence. That is to say, labour--I say that in quotation marks--is in a certain sense the atom of society itself and as such a very complicated complex, in which a chain reaction of causes is set in motion with the teleological positing of working man. [His] work can only succeed, if a *real* causal connexion is set into motion--and this in the direction which is in accordance with the teleological positing. However, if I examine this complex, then I come to the fact that positing man who does the work, is never able to comprehend all the conditions of the causal chain which he [himself] initiated; this is why through labour something different arises than the labourer had in his mind. Of course, the deviation may be minute at certain initial stages, but it is quite certain that the whole [fate of] mankind depends on such minute deviations. Let us say, man has merely by chance discovered the possibility of a better method for grinding stones; subsequently he recognized this improvement little by little as the superior [method]; gradually it became general practice. We cannot imagine progress at all, without such a development. To this we should add that always something else does result from man's ignorance about the conditions of [his] labour; more precisely, we should say that something else also results than has been originally intended. It is a prejudice to take over from scienticism the belief that the field of the unknown will be reduced

through the increase of experience, viz. with the collection of experiences. I believe, it [the field of the unknown] is increasing. The better we know nature--with which science and thus also labour are in interaction--the more obvious this unknown field will become; it has [thus] the most important consequences for later human development. This unknown and unmastered field of social reproduction is not only limited to primitive stages, but exists also in more developed stages. [I trust,] you understand how this is connected with those ontological questions which ask for the structure of the complexes. The individual factory owner understood his own production better than the artisan of Antiquity or the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, unknown forces developed from the modern complex of production and consumption which finally arose in the depressions. I believe today, that the scientists in economics are prejudiced in thinking that the theories of Keynes and others enable us to control completely the economy. Especially, the present-day questions as they arise through the end of the *Wirtschaftswunder* ["economic miracle" of the German post war development], show how little the economic development can be controlled in the long run.

Now I want to return to an ontological question: the more complex a thing is, the more man's consciousness finds itself confronted by an object extensively as well as intensively infinite; [man's] best knowledge can [then] only

be a relatively approximate knowledge. After I have recognized X and Y as qualities of an object, there is never a guarantee that there are not Z, and other qualities which, under certain conditions, could achieve a practical efficacy. Now, I think that we can approach these facts only in the form of an ontology, [viz. one] in which the interrelations of existence are--you know--of interest and [in which] we disregard whether any [such] interrelation of existence is dealt with by today's sciences as [a] psychological or sociological or epistemological or logical [fact]. We look at this interrelation as a being [sic!] interrelation; it is of secondary importance to us which of these sciences is dealing with this interrelationship. This is in my opinion the essential point of view of Marxism; at which I can refer to Marx' famous definition that categories are forms of being and forms of existence; [this definition] stands in direct contrast to, say, Kant's and also Hegel's conception of the categories. You can find out at once that from this interpretation follows the genetical method, if you look at the beginning of *Capital* where the starting point is not labour, but the most primitive form of barter. From the ontology of barter follows at the end, finally the genetical derivation of money as universal commodity. That is to say, Marx shows how the fact that gold and silver became...money, again was ontologically connected with the physical properties of

gold and silver. These metals corresponded to the conditions of the universal barter; this is why gold and silver gained everywhere predominance as general means of exchange--as money.... In this simple way money originated ontologically out of barter. Since the ancients were not yet able to grasp this ontological explanation, you can find continuously since Homer and Sophocles the elegiac laments over [money's] mythic force which--in spite of being only dead matter--enters into society and assumes power over man. You can see that a problem which was incomprehensible for a whole epoch, had become completely clarified through the ontological deduction which Marx gave at the beginning of *Capital*

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LUKÁCS: ...The primitive man (from whom I started before), collected stones somewhere. One stone can be used to cut branches, the other not; and this fact--"fit or unfit" for cutting--represents a completely new problem which could not be asked in inorganic nature; for if a stone rolls down from a mountain, then it cannot be a question of success or failure, whether the stone arrives in one piece or breaks into a hundred pieces. From the point of view of inorganic matter this does not matter at all, whereas from the point of view [even] of the simplest

labour, from the problem of utility...and usability...arises a conception of value. The more labour develops, the more extensive become the implicit concepts of value, the more subtle and higher the question appears: whether something--within a process which becomes more and more social, and more and more complicated--is fit or unfit for man's own reproduction. Here is in my opinion the ontological source of that which we call value. And from this antithesis of the valuable and the valueless develops a completely new category which refers to that which has been a meaningful social life or a meaningless life. Here you have a great historic process in front of you, in which a meaningful life was originally--and has been for a long time since--identical with a socially conformable life. Take for instance the famous epitaph of the Spartans who died at Thermopylae; a meaningful life meant for them to die for Sparta--and that is all! Certain oppositions develop already in antiquity. Man has to act uniformly in the most diverse complexes of social life, for he has to reproduce his own life. Thus develops what we call personality, the individuality of man. You can also see in this an ontological scale: Leibniz demonstrated once to the princesses of Hannover that there are not two identical leaves of the same tree. In the 19th century, we rediscovered the Leibnizean two leaves since we found out that there are no two human beings who have the same finger-prints. However, this is only the

category of singularity. And the fact that from singularity evolves an individuality, represents a problem of the socio-ontological development.

Now, I think that art (in its developed form), is such a retrospective relation to man. This is to say, I do not want to represent the objective reality from man's point of view... For I must attempt to consider [reality] independently, since I could not work otherwise. If my wishes, my tendencies, etc. influence my work--not my teleological positing, but the execution of the teleological positing...--then in any case I shall miss my objective. However there exists this other point of view, namely that the totality of these positings is again related back to man. And from such a retrospective reference evolves now the unification of the diverse starts of art, as in the cave paintings, the primitive dances, the beginning of the transition from the simple building into architecture.... There exists a unified tendency that relates the whole reality to the development of man or, as I call it in *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, the self-consciousness of man. And therefore I would like to say that art is (in the ontological sense) a reproduction of that process with which man interprets his own life in society and nature with all its problems which--with all favourable, unfavourable, etc. principles--determine this very life. And that is why art--and this is now extremely important

for ontology--is not...(in the de-anthropomorphic sense) separated from the genesis [sic!]. To refer again to a formulation of Marx, we can say that we can understand Homer only as the childhood of mankind. If we would try to understand the men of Homer's time as contemporary men, then the result would be complete nonsense; yet we do experience Homer and the other ancient poets as our own past. Actually, we can return to the human past only through the medium of art; the great facts of history would in general give us only a variation of different structures. It is precisely the mission of art to demonstrate that within the framework of variations, there has been a continuity of man's behaviour towards society and towards nature.

HOLZ: May I insert a question at this point? I think this conception of our own past (i.e. that which we recollect or reproduce in our own consciousness through a...work of art), does not entirely suffice, since we experience also with a work of the past--not with each, but with quite a few--as Walter Benjamin once called it--something like present time, i.e. a reactivation of that work's content into a topical problem [of today]. That is to say, one could reproduce the problem of Sophocles' *Antigone* certainly always in many other social situations; and I mean as a topical problem and not only as one which belongs into the childhood of humanity.

LUKÁCS: Let's see, I would like to go back to the primitive [sic!] everyday life. Each human being has a certain consciousness, a certain recollection of his own childhood. Now, if you consider the experiences of your childhood, then you shall find most certainly various classes of experiences. There have been certain things which you will today regard in a certain way as purely anecdotal; they have nothing in common with your present psycho-moral existence. On the other hand you will find that you did and said certain things in your childhood which, in a nutshell, contain your whole present Ego. We have to take the past in an ontological, and not in an epistemological sense. If I approach the past epistemologically, then the past has passes. Ontologically

however, the past is not always the past, but plays into the present--and, to be sure, not always the whole past, but parts of it; and not always the same parts. Again I would like to remind you of your own development; surely, diverse moments of your childhood played within your development at different times various roles. So that the whole process of preservation in the arts--as I would say: as recollection of man's past--is a very complicated process. Also, you should consider the fact that Homer was just about forgotten at the end of antiquity; he was--until the beginning of modern times--completely displaced by Virgil, because men of the middle ages discovered their

childhood in Virgil. The development of the bourgeois culture was essential--beginning with the English critics who used to play off Homer against Virgil....--for humanity in order to tie [once more] to Homer as its past. A similar development has happened with Shakespeare. Thus we have this up and down of that which we regard as living world literature or art of the world. For instance, think only how such a renowned art historian as Burckhardt had (still) rejected Mannerism and Baroque and to what [esteem] the Renaissance of Baroque has come today. It is evident to everybody that this recollection itself is a historic process, and that I--if I consider the recollection and the past--am forced to accept them as ontological moments of the vital evolution of mankind--and not as an epistemological argumental division of time into past, present and future... However it is not true, as Benjamin meant, that the past (if it connects to our presence), is jumping out of the past. It has been one of the greatest experiences of my childhood, when I, at the age of nine, read a Hungarian prose translation of the *Iliad*; the fate of Hector, namely the fact that this man who suffers defeat, is in his right, is the better hero, became a determining [perspective] for my whole later development. This is evident in Homer, and if it were not in there, it could not operate in this way. However it is absolutely clear that not everybody has been reading the *Iliad* thus. Think only of the difference

in the interpretation of Brutus by Dante and in the Renaissance, and you will see how differentiated all this is. Here we have a great process, a continuous process, from which each epoch is drawing whatever it needs for its own purposes. If you want me, I will again reverse the traditional science. The philologist of comparative literature thinks in terms of influences: e.g. *Götz von Berlichingen* influenced Walter Scott's novels, etc. I believe that these things evolve in reality completely differently, as I attempted to show in *Der Historische Roman*. The problem of the historicity of literature developed as a consequence of the French revolution, the Napoleonic wars, etc.--as you know, [this problem] did not yet exist in the 18th century. Inasmuch as Walter Scott was touched by this personally, he [simply] found a clue in *Götz von Berlichingen*--after Molière's maxim:--Je prends mon bien où je le trouve--yet *Götz von Berlichingen* evolved for quite different reasons. [All] this has for the ontology of art exceptionally important consequences: namely that only those works of art will stay alive, which are in a broad and deep sense connected with the development of humanity as humanity, and can therefore operate in the most diverse forms of interpretations. If you describe the history of the effectiveness of Homer, or Shakespeare, or Goethe, you will find reflected in it the controversy of the whole development of the consciousness of the later time. Now we come to the very important problem that we

find also works of art--or so called works of art--which react very vividly to certain problems of the day, but are not able to develop these problems of the day to the height of those problems; which however--this way or that way, positively or negatively--play a role in the development of men, [but] become obsolete after a relatively short time. As an old man I can talk; there were authors who were (when I was young) incredibly famous and accepted very enthusiastically--take Maeterlinck, d'Annunzio and so on, who are unreadable today. Evidently, the history of literature and art is partially a live process, [and] partially a common grave [*Massengrab*]. Looking at the individual sciences, we get to a wrong conception; to wit, since the individual science is in a position to deduce everything from its past, there develops the illusion as if [all these deduced] things were in a live interrelation with the continuity of the recollection of man's evolution. This is not merely a question of good or bad quality. For instance, consider most of the dramatists of the Elizabethan age; they were considerable poets. But if I disregard one, or two episodic effects, then [I find that] out of this time only Shakespeare possessed a live power. Now it were interesting to find out why Shakespeare has these effects and not the others. I presume, Marlowe, Ford and Webster are quite lively, namely for the English teacher, but not for the development of mankind. Here

again, the practice of the sciences has obscured a real interrelation instead of making it clearer.... The eternal element in literature and art has actually a much greater stability than we are used to thinking. In antiquity this was simply demonstrated by the fact of what was saved as manuscript and what was not. A similar selection goes on in our time which, with a certain inexorability, cuts out [those] things which touch the world only superficially...

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 One cannot say at all whether Homer had any conception of humanity, and yet a great problem of humanity is raised in the scene where the old Priam drives up to Achilles in order to receive Hector's corpse; [this is] a problem which (in a certain sense) today no man can pass, if he--how should I say--wants to settle his own account with the past and himself. This is the problem that I mean, when I speak of the recollection of humanity. Incidentally, here emerges also a connexion to Hegel's philosophy; you will remember that the end of his *Phenomenology of Mind*, where the Absolute Spirit appears to represent itself as the *Er-Innerung* [conceptual recollection] and thus in opposition to *Ent-Ausserung* [externalization]. Only that Hegel makes thus the moment of the past too dominating, while in my theory that past represents on the one hand the past (and a self-experience) [and] on the other hand a motivation

to form a [definite] attitude toward the present. And so far, really, each society has taken up this motivation in this manner, namely that [each society] returned to certain instances of its past. Think of the French revolution and its cult of antiquity...It does not matter whether (in practice) Robespierre's or Saint-Just's conception of antiquity was the right one. In any case, Robespierre and Saint-Just would not have been able to act [the way they did], if they would not have chosen antiquity to have this connexion with their thinking...Thus, mankind's recollection of its past includes the arts; and I would like to say that [even] human life achieves [sometimes], in certain moments such an importance...it becomes similar to a work of art. I think for instance, of the life of Socrates;...From this point of view it is even completely irrelevant whether Jesus has ever lived or not, whether his picture in the Gospel shows him historically true or not. There exists a gesture of Jesus, which has been a living power from [the time] of the crises of the dissolving slave society--until today--to which one has to get down, one way or another--remembering only "The Grand Inquisitor" in Dostoevsky. And it is not only Dostoevsky; the paradigm co-operates [also] with science; think of Max Weber's lecture *Politics as profession*, where he contrasts *Realpolitik* with the sermon of the mount...in order to arrive at a position for political actions. This shows--

absolutely irrespective of historic faithfulness--that the figure of Jesus gained as such an importance for humanity as the figure of Antigone, or of Hamlet, or of Don Quijote, and so forth. Speaking aside, I would say that it is possible that such figures influence a great part of [man's] possibilities of action. Just take (in the 19th century), the figure of Napoleon that exercised a great influence from [sic!] Rastignac to Raskolnikov; notwithstanding that there exists absolutely no work of literature which would present the figure of Napoleon in an adequate form. This shows only that there exists an ontological need--in a steadily increasing degree--which...finds satisfaction precisely [*eben*] through the arts. What I have said today about Jesus, does not contradict [what I say now]; it merely shows that those tendencies (which lead from the genesis of art to mythology), produce analogously a very specific need for art...thus we realize in Homer the exemplaric role of the earlier heros for the behaviour of the Homeric heros. Within the forms of the respectively topical technique, but in its last effect independently of this technique, [all] art touches [*trifft*] with its contents the essence of man's evolution--from this results art's permanent effect.....

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